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LACY'S HOME PLAYS.

DRAMAS

FOR

COLLEGE CAMP & CABIN.

SERIO-COMIC PLAYS

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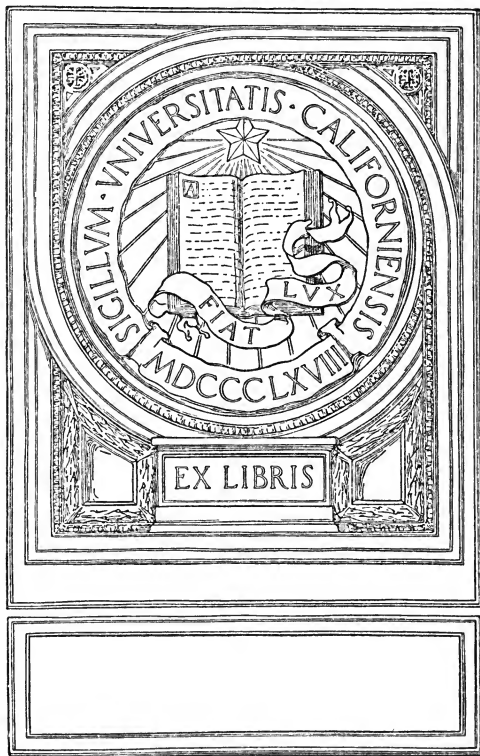
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THOMAS HAILES LACY,
89, STRAND, LONDON.

GIFT OF
Mrs. F. Scott Smith



87

DRAMAS,
SERIOUS
AND
SERIO-COMIC,

FOR
COLLEGE, CAMP, AND CABIN,

Adapted for Male Characters only,

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
89, STRAND, LONDON.

186-?

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dr

Sept 2 Mrs. J. Scott Smith

HOW TO CARRY OUT A PERFORMANCE SUCCESSFULLY.

In preparing an apartment for the representation of charades, where the convenience of a raised stage is not available, the best alternative will be in an arrangement of moreen or woollen curtains for the proscenium,* with two large ones, running upon a rod, for an act drop, meeting in the centre of the stage, and to be drawn to and fro by a person on each side. The back scene may be formed by other curtains, to open in the centre and at each side, or more simply by two large screens, the last folds of which will make capital centre doors. The early resource of the stage may also be adopted with great advantage, and a placard on which is written in large characters a description of the scene where the incidents about to be represented take place, thus:—

This should be hung upon a hook previously affixed to the curtain or screen at the back, and must be changed with each change of scene. The friends assembled upon such occasions are always prepared to enjoy the entertainment provided; if much is not attempted, much will not be expected. Homely and queer contrivances, if frankly offered, will be cheerfully received. But one deficiency will not, nor should it be excused: when a character is accepted by either lady or gentleman, it ought to become a point of honour that the words of that part be correctly committed to memory; any neglect of this entails disgrace upon the individual, and annoyance and disappointment to all around; actors and audience will alike suffer, and reprobate the carelessness that *compromises not itself alone, but others*. If amateurs will but take the pains to become what is professionally termed *dead perfect* in the words, and *stand still* whilst speaking them, they will always be able to acquit themselves to their own satisfaction, and that of the spectators.

DRAWING ROOM
IN
WELBORN'S HOUSE.

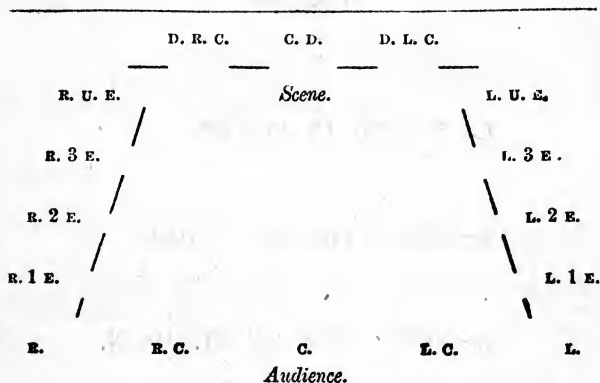


T. H. L.

* Muslin curtains and drapery of combustible material should be rigidly excluded. The frightful catastrophe at the Austrian Ambassador's entertainment upon the marriage of Napoleon and Marie Louise, arose from the ignition of a gauze festoon, carried by the draught of a large chamber against an adjacent chandelier.

EXPLANATION OF THE STAGE DIRECTIONS.

The Actor is supposed to face the Audience.



L. Left.

L. C. Left Centre.

L. 1 E. Left First Entrance.

L. 2 E. Left Second Entrance.

L. 3 E. Left Third Entrance.

L. U. E. Left Upper Entrance
(wherever the Scene may be.)

D. L. C. Door Left Centre.

C. Centre.

R. Right.

R. 1 E. Right First Entrance.

R. 2 E. Right Second Entrance.

R. 3 E. Right Third Entrance.

R. U. E. Right Upper Entrance.

D. R. C. Door Right Centre.

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4.—THE BLIND BOY.

JOSEPH IN EGYPT.

A Sacred Drama,

IN ONE ACT.

BY THE

COUNTESS LE GENLIS.

Translated by

THOMAS HOLCROFT,

And arranged for Representation.

1745-1809

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

89, STRAND,

(*Opposite Southampton Street, Covent Garden Market,*)

LONDON.

Characters.

JOSEPH, *Minister and Favourite of Pharaoh, King of Egypt,
under the name of ORASIS, and Son of Jacob and Rachel.*

BENJAMIN, *Second Son of Jacob and Rachel.*

SIMEON, } *Brethren of Joseph and Benjamin, and Sons*
REUBEN, } *of Jacob and Leah.*

PHASEAR, *an Egyptian Noble, the Friend of Joseph.*

ZARES, *one of the Servants of Joseph.*

Four other Brethren of Joseph, *mute.*

The Scene lies at Memphis, in the Palace of Joseph.

JOSEPH IN EGYPT.

"Say not thou I will recompense evil."—*Prov. xx. 22.*

"He that followeth after righteousness and mercy, findeth life, righteousness, and honour."—*Prov. xxi. 21.*

SCENE.—*A magnificent Hall—a raised chair of state, R. C.*

Enter PHASEAR. L., meeting ZARES, R.

PHASEAR. I wish, Zares, to speak to thy master in private.

ZARES. At present his duty detains him with the king.

PHASEAR. I will wait. But tell me, Zares, wherefore refuseth he to see these Hebrews, on whom he hath heaped so many benefits?

ZARES. I know not, my lord; and I am the more surprised at it, in that he seems deeply interested concerning them. These strangers have given a narrative, in a writing which I have presented him, of the famine which at present devours their land. Orasis was deeply affected: he bade me question the Hebrews concerning their father; and his joy was great, when he heard the old man had not hitherto suffered amid the public calamity. Some one comes—it is Orasis.

PHASEAR. Leave us, Zares.

Exit ZARES, R.

Now will I avenge myself of a perfidious brother. Orasis knows the extent of his ingratitude, and will not refuse to serve me. That friendship, by which we are united, will make him participate the just resentment with which my bosom burns.

Enter ORASIS, R. U. E.

My lord, I have waited for you with impatience. You now may render me the most important service.

ORASIS. Speak, dear Phasear.

PHASEAR. (*takes a letter from his pocket*) My lord, you know the writing of Cleophis.

ORASIS. Yes, it is your brother's hand.

PHASEAR. My brother! Give not the name of brother to the most ungrateful of men. Cleophis, as you know, my lord, owes to me his fortune; nor are you ignorant of the manner in which he has repaid all my benefactions and all my love. My ruin he hath sought, and every tie by which we are united, is broken.

ORASIS. (*after having read the letter*) This imprudent letter informs me that, seduced by a silly passion, Cleophis is the rival of his master, and dares to adore the object of Pharaoh's affection—his mistress. But how came this letter into your hands?

PHASEAR. I bribed the slave who is his confidant.

ORASIS. And what mean you to do?

PHASEAR. To be revenged. To inform the king, this very day, he is betrayed. You only, Orasis, may approach and speak to him at all times. Give him this letter.

ORASIS. Think what you ask—an act that would debase us both.

PHASEAR. I ask but what for you I would perform, without hesitation. Ah, were you in my situation, and I in yours——

ORASIS. Phasear! your better understanding passion blinds. Hurried away by resentment and hatred, you are not yourself, or you would think like me.

PHASEAR. Can you, whom I have seen so indignant at the ingratitude of Cleophis, can you oppose my just vengeance?

ORASIS. Cleophis is an ungrateful man, but he is your brother. How may you break the indissoluble ties which nature forms? Cleophis may justly lose the name of friend, but of the title of brother he may never be deprived. It is sacred and indelible. In vain would you estrange and separate yourselves; the will of heaven, the laws of

nature, the opinions of men, reason, prejudice itself, all drag you towards each other; all invite you to love, or at least, to serve each other like brethren.

PHASEAR. Ah, my lord, how easy is it for those to condemn resentment, who have never felt the envenomed wounds of ingratitude! Had you basely, like me, been betrayed by a brother——

ORASIS. Phasear! *Had* I been!

PHASEAR. My lord.

ORASIS. Your brother never yet attempted your life; and, though he even had been guilty of a crime so horrid, still I should have told you—vengeance were not for you. He is your brother.

PHASEAR. Did you *feel* my wrongs, my lord, your thoughts would be different. However, are you determined to refuse the favour I request?

ORASIS. Phasear! by the sacred name of friendship, let me entreat you will not be thus precipitate. Take time at least to reflect.

PHASEAR. Well, my lord, till to-morrow I will wait, but, should you persist in your refusal, I then will go myself, and present this paper to the king.

ORASIS. Yourself! Yourself the accuser of your brother!

PHASEAR. The avenger of my wrongs.

ORASIS. Think of the indelible disgrace.

PHASEAR. Let us speak no more on the subject, my lord; to-morrow you will inform me of your determination. I have another favour to ask: the Hebrews whom your bounty hath assisted, have had recourse to me to obtain a moment's audience.

ORASIS. What is their request?

PHASEAR. Deeply affected by your benevolence, they wish to express their gratitude to you in person.

ORASIS. Let them depart. Let them return to their aged father—I cannot see them. And have you, Phasear, spoken to these strangers?

PHASEAR. I have, my lord, and confess that the youth and appearance of the youngest have greatly interested me.

ORASIS. (*with agitation*) What! have they brought the youngest of their brethren! Know you the name of the boy?

PHASEAR. Benjamin.

ORASIS. (*aside*) What is it I hear! Is Benjamin with them! (*aloud*) Well, my lord, in compliance with your request, I will see the youth. Let one of his brethren conduct him hither.

PHASEAR. They are all assembled near the palace. I will go myself and bear your answer. *Exit, L.*

ORASIS. O thou! my nearest, dearest brother, beloved boy, whom Rachel bore, and whom I never saw but in thy cradle; how may I conceal that strong emotion with which thy presence agitates my bosom! What, so young, and undertake so long a journey, and so painful! And, great heaven! unto whose care hast thou been committed? To the sons of Leah, Jacob has entrusted Benjamin. But, alas! my father knows them not. Envious and cruel men, who vowed my destruction. If Benjamin be the beloved of Jacob, if he be dear to his father as Joseph was, I have every thing to fear for his life. How shall I protect him from the ferocious jealousy of his inhuman brethren? Brethren! and are these barbarous men my brethren? Alas! how shall I behold, and hide my emotion, the face of him who is to bring hither Benjamin? But what would his be, did he know that the Orasis who governs Egypt; Orasis, minister and favourite of a mighty monarch, is that same Joseph whom he sold like a vile slave! The very recollection makes my blood run cold with horror. The sight of one of these perfidious men, more powerfully will retrace to memory that day of hatred, rage and terror, when my brethren became a band of murderers. Again their tumultuous cries, their menacing and dreadful words resound in my ears. Again I behold them, inspired with mad fury, rejecting remorse, yielding to guilt, surrounding, seizing, and plunging me into the black pit they had chosen for my grave. From the depth of darkness, I implored the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and my feeble voice was heard even in heaven; and never can I better repay its benefactions, than by forgetting the injuries I have received. By triumphing over just resentment, imitating thy clemency, and pardoning guilt, shall I render thee homage most worthy of thee, and best express my gratitude for all thy goodness—such

are the sacrifices most acceptable in thine eyes. I hear footsteps—perhaps 'tis Benjamin! How shall I suppress all the affection I feel? Yet let me be calm. That his brother and conductor should know me in my present rank, under this disguise, and after the change of features which age and this burning climate have produced, I need not fear. They approach. Let me, if possible, dissemble that agitation and affection by which, alone, I can be betrayed. (*sits on a chair, R. C.*)

Enter BENJAMIN and SIMEON, L.

(*aside, and looking earnestly at BENJAMIN*) 'Tis he! 'Tis Benjamin! affecting picture of a beloved mother, how many former ideas, dear to memory, dost thou excite! (*aloud*) Come near. (*they approach and kneel*)

SIMEON. Thus at your feet, most puissant and benevolent minister of good, permit us to express our gratitude.

ORASIS. What is it you do? You had need of sustenance, and I had the power to serve. What have I done more than humanity required? If pity be not a sensation foreign to your bosom, you will cease to admire an action so natural and so necessary. (*beckons, they rise*) What is your name?

SIMEON. (C.) Simeon, my lord!

ORASIS. And the name of that youth?

SIMEON. Benjamin.

ORASIS. Is he your brother?

SIMEON. Jacob is our father, but Rachel, his mother, was not my mother.

ORASIS. And had Rachel only this son?

SIMEON. Alas! She had yet another.

ORASIS. And how was he called?

SIMEON. Joseph.

ORASIS. Is he come with you?

SIMEON. My lord——

ORASIS. Why seem you so disturbed?

SIMEON. In pity, forbear to question me farther.

ORASIS. What, was this son, this Joseph, unworthy of his father? Was he perfidious and cruel to his brethren? Deserved he their hatred?

SIMEON. (*overpowered*) He was innocent and virtuous.

ORASIS. You weep.

SIMEON. My lord, you know not how you rend my heart.

ORASIS. (*aside*) His remorse affects me; let me forbear to increase his affliction. (*aloud*) Come hither, Benjamin, and speak to me. (BENJAMIN *crosses*, c.) Should I desire to detain you awhile in Egypt, would you be contented to stay with me?

BENJAMIN. Alas! my lord, how might I stay? My father dwelleth in the land of Canaan.

ORASIS. Riches and honours I could easily procure you.

BENJAMIN. Riches and honours could not supply the loss of a father, the want of his society, the happiness of comforting his old age.

ORASIS. Your feelings are natural and just, and only increase the desire I have—you should remain. Yet, you shall see Jacob again. Suffer your brethren to depart; they will inform him why you are left in Egypt, and, whenever you desire, you shall again revisit the country he inhabits.

SIMEON. (L.) Ah, my lord, what is it you propose? Since Jacob hath lost the eldest son of Rachel, Benjamin is become the object of his dearest, tenderest affection. When to us he confided the beloved youth, he made us swear we would bring him back. If Benjamin be not with us, how shall we dare present ourselves before our father? The relation of your kindness towards Benjamin, will appear unto him but as a tale; and he will say unto us.—It is ye who have robbed me of my child.

ORASIS. What you! the brethren of Benjamin! Would it be possible he could suspect, could accuse you of a crime so horrible and unnatural? And wherefore should your father suspect you of barbarity, from which nature would shrink with detestation? How imagine you so inhumanly blood-thirsty, as to conspire together and murder an innocent brother, by whom you are all beloved? No, such wickedness may not be, nor such suspicion.

SIMEON. (*aside*) Each word he utters confounds and overwhelms me with shame.

ORASIS. Since, however, I see you will not grant me the favour I ask, you shall suffer no constraint. Depart,

Benjamin, with your brethren, only remain here some little while in the palace. A banquet is prepared, my friends will soon assemble, and I invite ye all to be my guests. When the duties of hospitality are fulfilled, ye shall be detained no longer; you may then go hence.

SIMEON. Gracious lord, your goodness——

ORASIS. Bring hither your brethren—go.

SIMEON and BENJAMIN bow and exeunt, L.

Jacob prefers Benjamin to the children of Leah. Have I not, therefore, cause to fear Benjamin is envied and hated by his brethren? Not to restore him to his father did they refuse me. He alone could supply the loss of me to my father; he has received those benedictions, those paternal caresses of which, by the perfidy of my brethren, I have been deprived. O, my father, not all the gifts of fortune, wealth, or honour, can make me forget thee. But here established, in a strange land, by ties the most sacred, minister of a sovereign who is my benefactor, ought I to to abandon Egypt—the government of which he has confided to my cares? Ought I to quit the wife whom he, or the children whom heaven hath given me?

Enter PHASEAR, L.

Phasear, I have need of thy friendship. May I depend on secrecy inviolable?

PHASEAR. Doth Orasis doubt my faith?

ORASIS. Time is precious—hear me. The Hebrews, with whom I have spoken, are now at a splendid banquet, here in this palace. I intend not to be present, but you shall supply my place. See that my cup of gold be placed before the youth, Benjamin, and when they depart, let the cup be secretly put into the mouth of the sack that belongeth to Benjamin. This only was the request I had to make.

PHASEAR. How, my lord! secretly conceal the cup in his sack! I understand you not. Do you mean it as a gift?

ORASIS. Far from it. When you conceal it, be careful not to be seen.

PHASEAR. And what is your intent?

ORASIS. Ere they arrive at the gates of Memphis, they shall be arrested by my order, and my cup demanded;

which, being found in the sack of Benjamin, they shall be reconducted to the palace like criminals disgraced by the meanest of actions.

PHASEAR. Heavens! What is it I hear!

ORASIS. I see I yet shall augment your surprise. Learn then my whole secret. These strangers, for whom you are so much interested—are my brethren.

PHASEAR. Your brethren!

ORASIS. Yes, but brethren most inhuman, most perfidious; who together plotted to take away my life. Their covetousness only saved me. Ishmaelite merchants happened to pass, and I was sent a slave among strangers, here into Egypt.

PHASEAR. The tale makes me shudder. Yes, it was atrocious, unheard-of guilt. Yet, my lord, these men are your brethren.

ORASIS. Phasear! And is it you who speak thus? You, whose breast burns with the desire of *your* brother's destruction? You, who so earnestly have conjured me to aid your vengeful project.

PHASEAR. My lord! But think how fearfully criminal is the action you require from me.

ORASIS. And have you not required me to accuse a man who never was my enemy? Were I to show Pharoah the letter which you have obtained, the punishment of Cleophis would be inevitable.

PHASEAR. At least, I have not employed deceit to obtain his punishment.

ORASIS. Yes, you have had recourse to artifice and treason, by seducing the slave from whom you obtained the letter. And can you compare your situation to mine? Cleophis has forgotten to be grateful, has betrayed the duties of friendship; but has he sought your death? Has he attempted to bereave you of life or liberty?

PHASEAR. But the youngest of them! Surely you cannot hate that sweet, that innocent youth? He had no part in the wickedness of his unhappy brethren.

ORASIS. Hate him! hate Benjamin! Oh, no, you know not how dear he is to my heart. Be not anxious for his safety; that he has nothing to fear, let my most sacred promise be the pledge.

PHASEAR. I think I understand you. You would accuse the Hebrews of the double baseness of stealing the cup, and seeking to cast the guilt on Benjamin, who may entertain some suspicions of his brethren, and thus partake your hatred, and abandon them without regret.

ORASIS. Be that as it may—do you consent to the request I have made?

PHASEAR. These wretched men have implored my protection, and may I enter into a plot to do them evil? Not long since, you, Orasis, exhorted me to forget offences; would it not be an act worthy of you, to set me this noble example?

ORASIS. Would you follow it?

PHASEAR. (*after a moment's consideration*) Wherefore hesitate? Never was resentment better founded than yours. Your brethren are monsters unworthy to behold the light of day. And yet, I hope, in the moment of vengeance, you will listen to the voice of nature and humanity pleading for mercy. You do not desire their death?

ORASIS. Certainly not.

PHASEAR. Swear to me their lives shall be safe.

ORASIS. Willingly.

PHASEAR. Whatever other punishment you mean to inflict, it cannot be too severe for the crime of which they are guilty. You see, Orasis, my friendship for you hath vanquished my scruples; and now I have a right to exact from you the convincing proof, I ask, of an attachment equal to that of which you find me capable.

ORASIS. I understand you. Give me the letter of Cleophis—your brother.

PHASEAR. Here it is. You promise to give it to the king.

ORASIS. Yes, to-morrow morning, if you then should continue in your present disposition.

PHASEAR. Thus, into your hands, I give my means of vengeance, and undertake to see yours executed. *Exit, L.*

ORASIS. Into what fatal excesses are we hurried by our passions! How is Phasear borne away by their impetuous power, even while his reason detects their influence, and shrinks with horror from the same effects in others. O, Thou who knowest my heart, God of my fathers, deign

to aid my attempt, deign to preserve Benjamin from the dangers which threaten him, those dreadful dangers from which thy arm delivered me.

Exit, R.

Enter PHASEAR, L.

PHASEAR. It is done. I have fulfilled my guilty promise. But who shall stifle the remorse I feel? These miserable men, with hearts overflowing with gratitude, now, on quitting the palace, prayers and blessings have bestowed on Orasis—the cruel Orasis—who only hath heaped benefits upon them to make their ignominy the greater. This favourite of heaven, this deliverer of Egypt, this Orasis, so famous for his genius and aggrandisement, how have I been deceived in him! I admired—I loved him; but now I feel he hath lost all place in my heart. How could he suppose himself indebted to friendship for the unworthy service I have just performed? No—I have become his accomplice, but have ceased to be his friend. Yet, what have I to reproach him with? The desire of vengeance—a passion by which I myself am consumed! Oh, no! To-morrow, vengeance shall be satiated. Orasis comes.

Enter ORASIS, R.

ORASIS. I sought you, Phasear, to inform you of the success of our artifice. Zares hath just brought me intelligence of the loss of the cup, and orders are dispatched to follow and seize on Benjamin and his brethren. They will presently be here.

PHASEAR. Ah, my lord, in vain would I dissemble. Spite of myself, my heart reproaches me for having thus abetted your revenge.

ORASIS. And am not I to abet yours also? If you still desire the punishment of Cleophis from me, at least, hide your remorse.

PHASEAR. (*aside*) Ah, the recollection restores me to myself. (*aloud*) Yes, we will be revenged. All means are lawful to punish the perfidious and confound the guilty. Wherefore should we then feel remorse? The innocent we oppress not. To me, Cleophis is indebted for all his wealth—all his prosperity. To me he hath returned ingratitude and deceit. And have I not the right to

take that from him which I gave, since he only uses it to injure me.

Enter ZARES, L.

ORASIS. Well, Zares?

ZARES. My lord, I have found the cup.

ORASIS. In whose possession?

ZARES. The youngest of these base Hebrews. Yet his surprise and grief were so great, that I scarcely could believe him guilty. The crime, no doubt, was committed by his brethren; and, perhaps, without his knowledge.

ORASIS. Did they deny the theft?

ZARES. They appeared confounded—annihilated; spoke of remorse—divine justice; but only in half sentences, interrupted by sighs, groans, and tears.

ORASIS. Where are they?

ZARES. At the palace gates, under the guard of your slaves.

ORASIS. Go, find, bring them before me—all of them.

Exit ZARES, L.

PHASEAR. Let me fly; let me quit this place.

ORASIS. No—stay.

PHASEAR. I cannot. How can I, face to face, behold these men? Ah, if your heart were not inaccessible to pity, you would, at least, conceive what are my present feelings!

ORASIS. Pity! And what then is thy heart? Thou weepst the misfortune of strangers—of assassins—yet askest the destruction of a brother! I hear the voice of Benjamin. Phasear, go not hence, I must exact this proof of your friendship. (*sits, R. C.—PHASEAR goes to R.*)

Enter ZARES, SIMEON, REUBEN, BENJAMIN, with all the BRETHREN of JOSEPH, and GUARDS, L.

ZARES. Behold the criminals, my lord.

ORASIS. Wretched strangers, whom my bounty too easily admitted here! Wherefore have you violated the sacred ties of hospitality? You, no doubt, are the accomplices of your younger brother. I might deprive you all of the happiness of ever returning to your country; but

I will detain him, only, whose guilt cannot be doubted. Benjamin must remain in Egypt. As for the rest, depart; you are at liberty.

PHASEAR. (*aside, R.*) Ah! I breathe again.

SIMEON. (C.) No, my lord, Benjamin is not guilty. Punish us, whom the wrath of heaven pursues. Oh! restore Benjamin to his country and his father, and let all your indignation be on our heads!

REUBEN. (L.) Only let Benjamin be free, and we will accept slavery as a just judgment, which we have but too well merited.

BENJAMIN. (L. c.) What is it you say, my brethren? Would you justify me by accusing yourselves? Shall I be thought innocent by your making yourselves seem guilty? Or shall I see you sacrificed to my safety? No—I will partake your misfortunes.

ORASIS. What! do you all confess yourselves criminals?

All the BRETHREN of JOSEPH. (*except BENJAMIN, suddenly exclaim*) All! all!

SIMEON. Benjamin is innocent.

BENJAMIN. O my brethren!

SIMEON. Yes, my lord, from me you hear the truth. Overwhelmed with remorse, long have we dragged a deplorable life.—A moment of mad and guilty error has for ever deprived us of innocence, happiness, and peace. Pursued by remorse, most fearful, a most injured, most dreadful spectre haunts us incessantly. Fears, omens, and hovering evils add ten thousand imaginary torments to our real woes!—Nay, strange to thought! you, my lord, your presence, the sight of you, alone, first struck and still strikes our hearts with trouble and terror!—Your features, the very sound of your voice, recal to mind the object and the cause of all our guilty fears.—Yes, my lord, you hath heaven chosen to punish the crime which repentance, however sincere, however bitter, never can expiate!—Oh, that by offering ourselves the victims of divine justice, that heaven might but, in mercy, restore a moment's tranquillity to our bosoms!—Dispose of us, therefore, as you please, be it slavery or death; but oh, cast an eye of compassion on this child—on Benjamin! Oh, consider and spare his youth, his innocence! He,

alone, among us all, is worthy to console a virtuous father. Oh suffer him to live, that he may dry up his tears, and tell him, the wretched children of Leah have sacrificed themselves to preserve the last of the sons of Rachel!

ORASIS. (*turning towards his BRETHREN*) And is your repentance, then, your remorse so great—so sincere? Happy that I am! Again you are my brethren! I!—I am Joseph! I am your brother!

OMNES. (*drawing back with terror and surprise*) Joseph!

JOSEPH. Everything is forgotten. I am your brother, and my heart is yours! Yes, I am your brother! (*they fall upon his neck and weep*) And thou, dear Benjamin, child of a beloved mother. Ah, how sweet it is to hold thee thus—to call thee brother! Oh, speak! tell me, in this happy moment, what thy thoughts—what thy sensations are!

BENJAMIN. Alas, my brother, though I knew you not, how often have I wept your death—how often partook the sorrows of my father! Imagine then how great is my joy, how vast my happiness, to find myself thus in the arms of Joseph!

JOSEPH. Praised be the God of Jacob, who hath wrought these things! Never, my brethren, was I so vile, as to have a thought to harm you. Benjamin only did I wish to retain, and therefore was this stratagem contrived. But I have read your hearts, have seen your grief, and my fears are dispelled. Depart then to our father, take Benjamin with you, and restore him to the arms of Jacob. To the benefits you have received from the minister of Pharaoh, I will add the gifts of a brother—a brother whose heart is divided among you. Say to my father that duties, the most sacred, detain me in Egypt; but that I cannot enjoy my fortune without partaking it with him and with my brethren. Pray him to come—him and his family; then, when my father and my brethren are at Memphis, again I shall have found my country.

SIMEON. Behold our tears, my lord, let them speak for us!—It is not for our tongues to express the feelings of our hearts!—Joseph dares confide Benjamin to our protection.—O, my lord, lest those inquietudes, which, by the nobleness of your own mind, are at present dissipated,

should again revive before our return, permit me to remain at Memphis; let Simeon be the pledge.

JOSEPH. No, Simeon. No, my brother. Suspicion towards you is for ever banished this bosom.

SIMEON. Nay, my lord, but I will not leave you. Your tranquillity is now become dear to me.

JOSEPH. Well, my brother, be it as thou wilt, and be thou master here, Simeon. Be this the house of thy father; so consider, so use it. My brethren, the stratagem I used, and your innocence, must be publicly proclaimed; then will I give orders for your safe conduct, and receive your farewell.

PHASEAR. Noble and generous friend! Thinkest thou that Phasear only would admire thy virtues? Give me back that fatal letter.

JOSEPH. (*returning the letter*) Phasear, when I accepted this paper, be certain I knew thou wouldest ask me to return it.

PHASEAR. Henceforth be hatred and vengeance—those dreadful sensations—those insensate passions of feeble and cruel minds—banished my breast. Thou hast informed—thou hast taught me to feel the happiness and glory of knowing to pardon. (*he destroys the letter*)

JOSEPH. Thou hast done well, my friend. On that solemn day, when Pharaoh, in the midst of the mighty and the wise, proclaimed me the minister and ruler of his empire—then, glorious as was that day to me, I felt less great, less happy than now, when I embrace and weep with my brethren!

Curtain.

THE
HARVEST STORM.

A Domestic Drama,
IN ONE ACT.

BY
C. H. HAZLEWOOD,

AUTHOR OF

*"Return of the Wanderer," "Jenny Foster," "Blanche and
Perrinette," "The Eagle's Nest," "Bonnet Builder's Tea
Party," &c. &c.*

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
89, STRAND,
(Opposite Southampton Street, Covent Garden Market,
LONDON.

THE

H A R V E S T S T O R M

Characters.

JOHN GARNER (<i>an honest English Farmer</i>).....	E. H. L.
DICK DARRELL (<i>a dissipated and unscrupulous Yeoman</i>)	A. H. L.
MR. LYNX (<i>a Detective, and an honour to his Profession</i>)	W. P. J.
BARKER and NIBLER (<i>his Assistants, sharp and decisive in action</i>)	SS
SAMUEL LEXICON (<i>writing a new Dictionary of the English Language</i>)	SS
ANDREW RADFORD (<i>Clerk to a London Banking House—absconding, not from guilt, but from suspicion</i>)	W. P. J.
MICHAEL (<i>Brother to Andrew, and in the service of John Garner</i>)	W. P. J.
CHARLEY COOPER } (<i>two Gipsies, with slight perceptions of the difference between "meum"</i> {	
NAT LOVEL } (<i>and "tuum"</i>) {	

Period—Present day. Costumes—Modern. Time of Representation—40 minutes.

Programme of Scenery and Incidents.

BURTON FARM, NEAR OAKHAM, IN RUTLANDSHIRE!

THE WAY-WORN FUGITIVE SEEKING A REFUGE!

NARRATIVE OF A BANK ROBBERY.

"Who goes a borrowing, goes a sorrowing." Hiding from Justice. Rejected Courtship. The Hue and Cry.

PAINFUL DISCLOSURE TO A BROTHER!

£100 Reward for the Apprehension of the Absconding Clerk!

PLUNDER OF THE FARM!

ALARM OF THE INMATES! FALSE ACCUSATION!

CAPTURE OF THE THEIVES!

EXCULPATION OF THE INNOCENT!

"Short is the date in which ill acts prevail, |

But honesty's a rock can never fail."

THE HARVEST STORM.

THE HARVEST STORM.



SCENE.—*Country View, with distant corn fields, Farm House L., Barn R. 2 E.*

Enter MICHAEL from farm—music.

MICHAEL. Another fine day for the harvest; lucky weather, this, for the farmers, and I'm sure no one merits it more than my good master. I owe everything to him; for when my parents died he became a second father to my brother and I; to me he gave shelter and education, and procured for my dear brother a clerk's situation at a banker's in London, where he has been these seven years. Good worthy master, may providence smile upon your crops and fill your barns with harvest's bounteous store. (*takes letter from his pocket*) I have just received this letter from my brother, in which he tells me that his salary has again been raised; how happy it makes me to know that. He writes to me every week. I wonder when he's coming to see us; I wish he was here now.

The barn door opens, R. 2 E., and ANDREW RADFORD, looking pale and agitated enters from it.

ANDREW. He *is* here, Michael.

MICHAEL. My dear Andrew! (*going to him and taking his hand*)

ANDREW. Hush, hush! not so loud, don't mention my name, some one might hear you.

MICHAEL. Not mention your name! why not?

ANDREW. Brother, I am flying from justice, hide me, save me.

MICHAEL. Flying from justice! Oh, what have you done? Is Andrew Radford, my brother, a hunted thief!

ANDREW. No, Michael, no, I am as innocent as you are.

MICHAEL. Then why dread your name being mentioned.

ANDREW. Brother, listen to my story, then pity, believe, and assist me. At our bank in London, the clerks take it in turn to sleep in the room which contains the iron safe, wherein all the money, deeds and securities are placed; last Thursday week it was my turn to sleep there, but scarcely had I entered the room when a sudden dizziness overtook me, and I remembered no more; the next morning I was roused by master and his partner with the fearful news that the iron safe had been opened and its contents stolen. I was questioned; but bewildered and horrified, I knew not what I said. I was accused as the robber, my lodging searched, and there, secreted in my writing desk, was found a bundle of notes that had been stolen from my master's house.

MICHAEL. But you were innocent?

ANDREW. As you are, Michael; but no one would believe me so, all looked on me with doubt and suspicion. I was given until the next day to confess my guilt or else be arrested on the charge of robbery. I knew I had no one to speak for me. I felt I was incapable of proving my innocence, so, in the dead of night, I fled.

MICHAEL. Oh, rash and weak resolve! by doing that you have confirmed their suspicions.

ANDREW. I feel I have, I see my folly. But it is now too late. I must gain some seaport and sail for America—have you the means to help me to do so, brother?

MICHAEL. Alas, no! all that I have is in our savings bank, and cannot be drawn out under a notice. Meet this charge.

ANDREW. I should be condemned as guilty, I am sure of it, all looks so black against me; time, I am assured; will prove my innocence, and then I can stand erect again in the eyes of the world; but if once I get the taint of a prison on me, I feel

I should break down under it, and hear the world say the weight of my guilt had crushed me. Aid me, aid me, dear brother, to escape for the sake of *my* good name and your own!

MICHAEL. I would willingly if I had the means, but I have *not*. What can I do?

JOHN. (*within farm*) Michael, Michael, it's breakfast time, lad.

MICHAEL. My master comes! quick, Andrew, do not let him see you! (*ANDREW returns in barn, R.*)

JOHN. (*entering from farm*) I've been looking for thee everywhere, my lad.

MICHAEL. I heard you call, sir; I was just coming.

JOHN. You seem scared—what's the matter?

MICHAEL. I am not very well, sir, I—I—Dear master, will you do me a favour? I never asked you one before.

JOHN. Do thee a favour, Michael? Aye, that I will. What is it?

MICHAEL. I want you to lend me ten pounds, master; you can stop it out of my wages.

JOHN. What on earth can you want with ten pounds?

MICHAEL. I want to lend it to a friend, sir.

JOHN. Why you silly fellow! Dost think thou'd ever see it again? What's the name of the person who wants to borrow it of thee?

MICHAEL. I shouldn't like to tell you that, sir; but it will do a young man I know, a great deal of service; it will, indeed, master!

JOHN. Well, let me know who the young man is, and what he wants the money for, and then perhaps out of respect to you, I may let him have it.

MICHAEL. You must excuse me telling you his name, sir.

JOHN. Then you must excuse me lending you the money. No, no, my lad, I'll not see you imposed upon; this is some new acquaintance of yours, who wants to wheedle you out of your little savings. Come into breakfast; and don't say

another word on the subject, or else you'll offend me. So come in with me, for I want thee.

Exit into farm, L.

MICHAEL. (*following him*) My poor brother! what will become of him?

Exit into farm, L.

Enter DICK DARREL, a young farmer, R. U. E., looking at farm

DICK. That farmer Garnham's a lucky man—never saw better crops in my life; he's pretty warm, I warrant! Everything he touches seems to prosper; while, on the contrary, all I meddle with, goes wrong. To be sure, he doesn't bet on horse-racing—I do; I suppose that makes all the difference. That Michael who lives with him, I'll warrant he'll come into the best part of the old man's property—if I could only get round him he might help me to some of the farmer's money; but he doesn't seem to cotton to me somehow.

Enter SAMUEL LEXICON, with note book in his hand, R. U. E.

SAMUEL. "Cotton." (*writing in book*) "Cotton, a material from which shirts are made; and by which women easily make their fortunes."

DICK. Were you listening to me, sir?

SAMUEL. Certainly not, sir; but the fact is, I am compiling a new dictionary, forming a new signification to the English language, and I take the words as I hear them spoken—saves me a deal of trouble.

DICK. Oh, indeed! now I took you for some rascal of a lawyer.

SAMUEL. You don't like lawyers, then?

DICK. No, I don't; what's your opinion of them?

SAMUEL. I'll read it to you out of my dictionary. (*reads*) "Lawyer.—A learned gentleman who rescues your estate from your enemies and keeps it himself."

DICK. True enough, my friend, for I know an instance of that; and to think of my taking you for a limb of the law! excuse my oversight.

SAMUEL. Oversight ! I haven't got that word. (*writes in book*)
"Oversight.—Leaving your old umbrella in a coffee room and bringing away a new one in mistake."

DICK. (*aside*) A curious fellow this. (*aloud*) A stranger about here, I suppose?

SAMUEL. Yes, sir, merely travelling to pick up information.

DICK. Nice land about here.

SAMUEL. Beautiful ! I suppose you've a tidy slice of it.

DICK. I had at one time, but I lost a good deal by speculation.

SAMUEL. (*writes in book*) "Speculation.—Making your fortune by swindling your creditors and then turning insolvent."

DICK. You see I spent a good deal on my land trying to improve it by science.

SAMUEL. (*writing in book*) "Science.—Tying a tin canister to a dog's tail and observing which way he runs."

DICK. (*aside*) I wonder who this is ; he must be rich, or he wouldn't be so eccentric. (*aloud*) Yes, sir, joke as you will, but science to a beginner in the farming line is a young man's best companion.

SAMUEL. Allow me to differ with you, this is my definition : (*reads from book*) "Young man's best companion.—A friend who sees you safe home when you're unable to take yourself there."

DICK. (*aside*) I see Michael coming, I wish I could get rid of him. (*aloud*) If you wish to see the beauty of the country, sir, there's a fine view when you get through the corn fields. (*points L. U. E.*)

SAMUEL. (*looking*) Ah ! I see, whose large red brick house is that yonder ?

DICK. It belongs to Mr. Bowen, our magistrate.

SAMUEL. (*writes in book*) "Magistrate, a worthy old gentleman, who goes to sleep all the time a case is being tried, then wakes up and says 'I see it all. Three months.'"

DICK. (*aside*) Confound the fool, why don't he go. (*aloud*) I beg pardon, friend, but you are acting in a manner that——

SAMUEL. Acting! I beg *your* pardon, I'm doing nothing of the kind. He takes me for an actor, a tragedian perhaps! (*writes in book*) "Tragedian, a fellow who runs about the stage with a tin pot on his head and gets into a passion at so much a night." Well I'll be off, for I see you want to be left alone with your lady love. It's the dairy-maid I dare say. (*writes in book*) "Dairy-maid, supposed by cockneys to be a rustic Venus, but who eats a pound of fat bacon for breakfast, and drinks a quart of table ale to wash it down." (*going R. U. E.*) "Oh, that we can call these delicate creatures ours, and not their appetites."—Shakespeare!

Exit R. U. E.

DICK. Gone at last, and here comes Michael.

Enter MICHAEL from farm.

MICHAEL. What can I do, how obtain the money? I dread every moment that my master will enter the barn and discover him. (*aside*)

DICK. Good morning, Michael.

MICHAEL. (*starting*) Good morning, sir.

DICK. Sir! Why don't you call me Dick, you've known me long enough.

MICHAEL. (*aside*) I have, but never knew anything to your credit though.

DICK. I was wishing to speak to you, Michael. I have been thinking that we ought to be good friends, and it shall not be my fault if we are not.

MICHAEL. If you mean to abandon your bad and dissipated habits, so that one who respects himself can be your friend, I will be so; but until your actions give proof of this, I must beg you to let us continue as we are—not enemies, but certainly not friends.

DICK. "Certainly not friends."—How fine we talk, you ought to be proud of my notice, you who came here a friendless child.

MICHAEL. Some people rise by industry, others fall by dissipation.

DICK. You've a high spirit, my lad, but I may break it yet ; since you will turn my goodwill into hate, beware of me !

Exit, R. 1 E.

MICHAEL. (*watching him off*) He is gone. (*goes to barn, R.*) Andrew, you may venture, there is no one here.

ANDREW. The money, quick ; the torments of suspense — the fear of detection make me tremble like a child.

MICHAEL. Oh, my poor brother ! what will you do ? My master refuses to lend me the money, and I have no other friend I can ask.

ANDREW. Then I am lost ! I cannot remain longer in concealment, and to venture on the road would be equally dangerous, for I feel assured the officers are on my track.

MICHAEL. What can I do ? Tell my master all ? No, I dread to do that, for so strict are his notions of justice that he would instantly order his arrest.

ANDREW. (*starts*) Hark ! I hear footsteps.

MICHAEL. Quick, conceal yourself !

Exit ANDREW to barn.

Re-enter DICK, R. 1 E., with posting bill in his hand.

DICK. You are still here then ? I am glad of it ; I hold something in my hand that will crush your proud heart and level your pride to the earth if I choose to make it known.

MICHAEL. (*aside*) What can he mean ?

DICK. (*shows bill*) I'll read you what is printed here—listen. (*reads bill*) "£100 reward for the apprehension of Andrew Radford, late clerk in the employ of Sterling & Co., London, who is charged with robbery to a large amount. The above reward will be paid to any person or persons giving such information as may lead to his apprehension." (*to MICHAEL, who is agitated and trembling*) Ah ! does my news strike home ?

You didn't think your brother was an outcast flying from justice, a wretched thief with a price set on his head!

MICHAEL. Neither do I think so now, for I know he is innocent; this cloud which now hangs over my brother's name is but for a time, and I will trust to heaven to clear his name, and reveal the guilty.

DICK. (*going up*) So be it; since you are so bouncible, I know what to do, and so I leave the thief's brother to his meditations.

Exit, L. U. E.

MICHAEL. He will be captured; I shall be turned from the farm, and my brother branded with crime! Oh, merciful providence! what will be the end of this?

Enter MR. LYNX, a detective, R. U. E.

MR. L. (*looking about*) Burton Farm, near the five-acre field, this must be the place. Good morning, does one Mr. John Garner, a farmer, live hereabouts?

MICHAEL. Yes, sir, in yonder farm.

MR. L. Do you know one Michael Radford, who lives with him as servant?

MICHAEL. I am Michael Radford, sir.

MR. L. Indeed! now answer me truly, for I assure you it will be to your advantage to tell me all you know. Have you seen your brother lately? I want him, I'm a detective from London.

MICHAEL. (*starting, aside*) A detective! (*aloud*) My brother, I regret in that it is not in my power to afford you any information regarding him.

MR. L. You are certain? Be sure of what you say, for much depends on the truth of your answer.

MICHAEL. I have already told you, sir, that I cannot direct you to his retreat.

MR. L. Well, I'll take your word, but if you are deceiving me you'll be sorry for it, I assure you, my dear fellow.

Enter SAMUEL LEXICON, *overhearing the last words*, R. U. E.

SAMUEL. (*writing in book*) "Dear fellow—dear," an expression used by man and wife at the commencement of a quarrel."

MR. L. (*to* MICHAEL) If you should see your master about say I wish to speak to him, will you?

MICHAEL. I will, sir. (*going up to house and looking towards barn unobserved*) He is lost! *Exit in farm, L.*

MR. L. (*to* SAMUEL) Nice weather, sir.

SAMUEL. (*writing in book*) "Weather, an uncertain article, sure to be very wet if you go out with a new hat on, and very bright and fine if you go out in your old one and carry an umbrella."

MR. L. An artist, I presume.

SAMUEL. You *do* presume, sir, and I am *not* an artist; no, sir, I am a lexicographer.

MR. L. Oh, I see, one of those chaps who takes likenesses, and hang a board outside their shops, "A portrait and a black-pudding for a penny."

SAMUEL. (*writing in book*) "Black-pudding, a mysterious article of food, supposed to be composed of bullock's blood and sawdust." But allow me to correct you, sir, I said a *lexicographer* not a *photographer*—one illustrates words, the other faces. May I be allowed to ask what you are?

MR. L. I am a detective.

SAMUEL. (*writes in book*) "Detective, one who puts *down* thieves by taking them *up*."

MR. L. But to business. Have you seen a suspicious looking character about here?

SAMUEL. Nobody but yourself.

MR. L. Oh, you flatter me.

SAMUEL. No, I don't, I'm speaking the truth, I am indeed; don't be offended, you ought to feel proud at an author taking notice of you—author! I haven't got that word. (*writes in book*) "Author, a man who writes a lot of lies every week, and kills people in penny numbers."

Enter JOHN GARNER, from farm, L.

JOHN. (*to MR. L.*) I hear you wish to speak with me, sir.

MR. L. Yes ; your servant Michael has a brother named Andrew Radford, I believe.

JOHN. Quite right, and an honest young man he is. I recommended him to his present employers in London.

MR. L. I am aware of it, have you seen him lately ?

JOHN. Not these three months.

MR. L. Are you certain ?

JOHN. Positive ! why do you doubt my word. I never lie to any man ; what is your business ?

MR. L. That must be told in secret.

JOHN. Will you step into the house ?

MR. L. No, I have no time to stay.

JOHN. Well, I am going round the farm, will you walk with me ?

MR. L. I will.

JOHN. This way then. (*going up, R. U. E.*) We can talk as we go.

MR. L. Not here ; silence until we are alone.

Exeunt, R. U. E.

SAMUEL. (*writes in book*) "Silence, a thing never to be found where three women are." If this book don't astonish the literary world I am much mistaken, *my* dictionary goes straight to the point and tells people the real meaning of the words. I wonder how many I've got down. (*looks over his book*)

Enter CHARLEY COOPER and NAT LOVEL, two gipsies, observing him, from L. U. E.

NAT. (*aside to CHARLEY*) I thought you told me there was nobody here ; who's that chap ?

CHARLEY. You don't call *him* anybody do you ? Let's chaff him. (*they advance on each side of him*)

NAT. (*slaps SAMUEL on shoulder*) Hope you're well, sir.

CHARLEY. (*slaps SAMUEL on the other*) The aforesaid, sir.

SAMUEL. (*looks at them*) Gipsies! I haven't got them in my dictionary. (*writes in book*) "Gipsies, mahogany coffee-coloured people supposed to be able to read the stars and tell fortunes, but in reality the greatest liars and thieves under the sun."

NAT and CHARLEY. Hollo! hollo, mate, draw it mild!

SAMUEL. No, I shall not draw it mild; mine's a dictionary that shall tell people what they really are in plain English.

NAT. How dare you take away our characters?

SAMUEL. Really, gentlemen, I was not aware you had any!

NAT. (*draws knife*) Do you know what this is?

CHARLEY. (*drawing another*) And do you know what this is? and what it's likely to do?

SAM. Yes; what I'm going to do.

CHARLEY. And what's that?

SAM. Cut! (*runs off*, R. U. E.)

NAT. (*looks after him*) Ha, ha, ha! yonder he goes. I thought he wouldn't chop logic with us long; if he had I'd have chopped his ears off. (*looks round*) Nobody seems about. Now's our time!

CHARLEY. To business then! You say the old farmer always has money in the house?

NAT. Heaps! Our Nell came round yesterday to observe the premises; under the pretence of selling cabbage nets, and telling fortunes. She tells me she peeped in at the window; and twigg'd the old man counting his money into the cash box; and it was all in gold, my lad; think of that! no numbered notes to nail a chap; but shining gold!—lovely canaries that we must fly off with!

CHARLEY. Is there ever a dog on the premises likely to spoil us?

NAT. Not one! and all the people are in the fields as busy as bees.

CHARLEY. How grateful we ought to be to Providence for being so kind to us. Follow me! and let us sneak in. (*they go*)

towards house, and peep in) Hold hard! here's somebody!
'To cover! to cover! (*they conceal themselves behind house*)

MICHAEL. (*entering from farm, with food in basket*) I wonder if I can take this to my brother unperceived? How I long to save him from the crime which is so unjustly laid to his charge! But what chance? what hope have I of doing so! But yet I must!—I will save him at all hazards! for his capture and disgrace would be my death! But courage, Michael; courage! he is not taken yet; and if I but can secure his safety until tomorrow, I'll go into the town, and try every friend I have in the world, but I'll raise the money he requires for his escape! There seems to be no one about; now, then, is the time to venture.

Music—goes cautiously into barn.

Re-enter NAT and CHARLEY from behind farm.

NAT. Now's our time, quick does it. (*they exeunt into Farm*)

Enter Mr. LYNX and JOHN GARNER, R. U. E.

JOHN. Can it be possible!

MR. L. I thought my news would surprise you, farmer.

JOHN. Whoever would have thought it? I hope you are convinced that I cannot tell you where to find Andrew.

MR. L. Perfectly, or else you would, I am assured.

JOHN. Why not see his brother and ask him?

MR. L. I have already done so, and he, like you, says he does not know where he is to be found.

JOHN. It's the strangest affair I've heard of for some time.

MR. L. I thought it would astonish you; for my own part it's as queer a case as ever I was employed upon.

JOHN. Well but do you think there is no way to find him, look here. (*they talk together in dumb show*)

Enter NAT and CHARLEY from farm, with bags of money and cash box, they steal off, R. U. E.

JOHN. Do you mean to continue your search?

MR. L. I never give up my game till I've run it down.

JOHN. I trust you may find him, and that speedily.

MR. L. Trust me for that; I'm Lynx by name and Lynx by nature; let's in and question the lad again.

JOHN. If he knows anything depend on his telling you.

MR. L. Not till he's heard my news, I'm afraid; but I'll try him. (*they exeunt in farm*)

Re-enter DICK DARREL. R. U. E.

DICK. If I haven't had my way with Michael at least I've had my revenge; there's two officers down at the Barley Mow from London and they swear they'll have him if he's in the country. Now, Michael Radford, your proud spirit will soon rue the day when you insulted Dick Darrel.

Re-enter JOHN and Mr. LYNX from Farm—*Music*.

JOHN. Ruin! beggary! poverty stares me in the face, for I have been robbed—robbed of all I had in the world.

MR. L. The cleanest thing I ever heard of, when did you last see the money safe?

JOHN. When I rose this morning. Let search be made everywhere; you are an officer, tell me what is to be done, for heaven's sake?

DICK. What's the matter?

JOHN. I am robbed, Richard—robbed of every penny I had in the world, it was but yesterday I drew it from the bank to place it in the London one; and I find it gone! gone!

DICK. But where was Michael, your careful favourite?

JOHN. Aye, true, true; why did he leave the farm?

DICK. Why indeed! if he don't know something of it I'm a Dutchman.

SAMUEL *re-entering*, R. U. E.

SAMUEL. Bless me, what's the matter? your faces seem as full of meaning as my dictionary.

MR. L. There's been a thief on the premises.

SAMUEL. (*writes in book*) "Thief, a dishonest character; a rogue, who is better fed and treated than many poor paupers are."

MICHAEL *is seen to enter from barn, and tries to enter the farm unperceived.*

JOHN. (*turning and seeing him*) Michael! how is this? why are you out of the house? you have been my ruin; for by your carelessness, my house has been robbed of every penny.

MICHAEL. Robbed! no, no, master; impossible! it was but this moment that I left all safe.

JOHN. What business could have taken you into the barn?

DICK. Aye, what indeed?

MR. L. This looks very strange, young man.

MICHAEL. Why do you all look at me in this manner? surely to heaven you do not think that I know anything of this?

MR. L. What is your master to think? when knowing that there is a large sum of money in the house, you leave the premises without a soul to take care of them.

MICHAEL. Master! master, don't think, pray don't, that I know a word of this villany; you don't think so? I'm sure you don't. Oh! let me at least hear you say that.

JOHN. What can I think, Michael? no one but you knew where my money was kept.

MICHAEL. But why should I rob you? what need have I of money?

JOHN. What need had you of the ten pounds, you wanted to borrow of me a short time ago?

MICHAEL. (*confused*) Oh! that—I—I wanted for—for——

JOHN. For what?

MICHAEL. Oh! I cannot, dare not tell you.

DICK. (*to LYNX*) You see how the case is?

MR. L. I'm afraid I do, I've seen too many cases of the same kind not to understand all this. A good and virtuous youth, as I hear he has been, forms an acquaintance with some

crafty fellow ; let's him have the run of the house when his master's out, and in return he runs off with the cash box, a common case. My experience tells me that a thief seldom carries so large a sum with him but mostly hides it ; so my plan is to begin to search the premises, let's look over the barn in the first place. (*going to barn, MICHAEL places himself before it*)

MICHAEL. No ! no, there is nothing there, indeed there is not.

MR. L. Well if there is nothing there why should you mind my searching for it ?

DICK. (*to JOHN*) What do you think of Master Innocence now ?

SAMUEL. (*writes in book*) "Innocence, a thing we all possess till we're found out."

JOHN. Michael, if you do not wish me to think you guilty, stand from the door.

MICHAEL. I cannot ! I will not, your money is not there ; but still you must not enter.

MR. L. (*aside*) I see we shall have a tough job with this fellow. (*to SAMUEL*) Oblige me by stepping down to the Barley Mow ; and asking my brother constables to come here, and bring their handcuffs with them.

SAMUEL. (*writing in book*) "Handcuffs, heavy steel bracelets for light fingers." I'm off like the first edition of my dictionary.

Exit, R. U. E.

JOHN. Stand aside, Michael.

MICHAEL. No—no, master, (*kneels*) in mercy take my word, that not one penny is in this barn ; but I do not wish you to enter—why I dare not tell you ; but here, under the broad sky, in the face of heaven and man, swear I am guiltless of robbing my kind old master.

DICK. Oh, this is child's play ; if you won't force him from the door, I will. (*going up to him*) Out of my way or I'll make you. Stand aside, thief ! (*as he advances to seize him, ANDREW hastily enters from barn and knocks him down*)

JOHN. Andrew ! and here.

ANDREW. Could I bear more ? could I listen longer to the taunts and accusing words that proclaimed my brother and myself dishonest. No, I am here ; do with me what you please, for the two brothers will brave their fate together.

Re-enter SAMUEL. R. U. E.

SAMUEL. Your brother's innocent if you're not, for your brother officers (*to* LYNX) have caught the real thieves with the money in their possession ; and here they come with it.

Enter BARKER and another OFFICER, with cash box and money, bringing on COOPER and LOVEL, hand-cuffed, R. U. E.

BARKER. (*gives them to* JOHN) This money is yours I believe, be kind enough to attend before the magistrate in the morning to give evidence against the men if you please.

CHARLEY. Well I'm blessed ! you're not agoing to persecute us in that way for next to nothing. We didn't mean to prig it, not by no means ; we only took it to see how fur we could carry it without dropping it. It was a wager betwixt us. I bet Nat here, a tanner that I could carry it further than he could bring it back, and you grabbed us both afore I had carried it half as far as I could—It was only a wager—You wouldn't go for to lag a poor cove for a wager, would you now ?

MR. L. Away with them, we know something else of you. You'll get a travelling ticket you may be sure of it. Off with them.

CHARLEY. Well then, blow you all, that's what I say. I shall hemigrate, I won't give a cuss to stay in a country vot persecutes the hindustrious poor in this way. Come, Nat, keep up your pecker ; we shall only have fourteen years' board and lodging for nothing. So off we goes, and blow the expense.

They are taken off, R. U. E.

MICHAEL. Oh ! joyful event, that clears my good name in the eyes of all.

DICK. But still your brother's guilty.

MR. L. How do you know he's guilty?

DICK. Why isn't there a reward offered for him?

MR. L. There was yesterday, but there is not to day.

MICHAEL and ANDREW. No!

DICK. Why how the devil's that?

MR. L. (*to DICK*) The real robber confessed his guilt this morning at the Mansion House, he was a fellow clerk of this young man's; and on the night he had to guard the bank, he drugged the drink, plundered the strong room, and by the aid of an accomplice placed some of the notes at your lodgings—and that shuts up your note I believe, my friend.

JOHN. (*congratulating ANDREW*) Andrew, my lad, thou art the honest fellow I always took thee for. (*shakes his hand*)

ANDREW. My kind, my earliest friend.

DICK. Well! this is a strange go.

SAMUEL. (*writes in book*) "Go" a word of one syllable, which some people would be wise to adopt; before they are kicked out. (*to DICK*) Dick, you look Dickey.

DICK. Curse me, if I ever enter the village again. *Exit R. 1 E.*

SAMUEL. For which the village ought to be very much obliged to you.

JOHN. (*taking a hand each of MICHAEL and ANDREW*) Andrew and Michael, you shall be my heirs; the money I will leave you must prosper threefold in your hands for it has been gained honestly, and may every honest lad meet with a friend like me to help them.

MICHAEL. I see friends around me on every side, whose bright looks tell me that we have reaped their praise and gained their smiles, and if a few clouds gathered over our Harvest Moon, Providence has dispersed the storm we hope for ever.

Short is the date in which ill acts prevail.

But honesty's a rock can never fail.

Curtain.

THE
CROSS OF ST. JOHN'S.

A STORY OF GHENT.

A Drama,
IN THREE ACTS.

FOR MALE CHARACTERS ONLY.

William
BY
W. J. LUCAS,

AUTHOR OF

Traitor's Gate, Court of Edward IV., The Death Plank, The White Farm,
The Chapel of the Hermitage, or The Sacrilegious Hand, &c., &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
89, STRAND, LONDON.

THE CROSS OF ST. JOHN'S.

TIME OF ACTION—1535.

CHARACTERS IN PART FIRST—GHENT.

BALTHAZAR MERX, *Leather Merchant.* HKB

SIMEON MERX, *his Son.* HKB

THEODORE MAUVILLE, *Simeon's Cousin.* SS

SCHULMANN, *a Youth in employ of Merx.* W.P.D.

BONAVENTURE, *an aged Man, ditto.* W.P.D.

BURGOMASTER OF GHENT. W.P.D.

PART SECOND—PARIS.

SIMEON MERX. HKB

THEODORE MAUVILLE. SS

CORNELIUS KEDGE, *as Lord Fulcius Flashington.* S.P.D.

SAMSON SNOOZE, *as Hon. Lumpkin Lightlaw.*

BARON DE BEAUMONDE. HKB

COLONEL VON BLUSTERBOB. W.P.D.

JEAN, *a Waiter.* W.P.D.

LACON LESTER, *an English Student.* W.P.D.

PART THIRD—GHENT.

PROVOST OF GHENT. W.P.D.

CURATE OF ST. JOHN'S. W.P.D.

BALTHAZAR MERX. HKB

SIMEON MERX. HKB

SCHULMANN. W.P.D.

THEODORE MAUVILLE. SS

BONAVENTURE. W.P.D.

ADVOCATE GENERAL. W.P.D.

Counsel, Officers, &c. W.P.D.

THE
CROSS OF ST. JOHN'S;
A STORY OF GHENT.

PART I.—GHENT.

SCENE.—*A Closet in the House of Merx, door L.—window, R. C., to which are practicable shutters. Through the window is seen a perspective of roofs—among them at a distance the spire of St. John's Church, surmounted with a cross. Large iron chest, R.; door, R.—chairs, table, &c.*

BALTHASAR and BONAVENTURE seated at opposite ends of a table.

BALTH. (L.) Good! friend Bonaventure, excellent! I indorse every word you say. You make at once to the point, and it's as hard to pick up an answer to your logic as to that of a learned doctor in dispute. Yet others will see more force therein than I can find, and for manifest reason.

BONA. (R.) You are a father.

BALTH. Ay, there it is, and a fond one. I love my boy: I loved his mother. In truth she was not only a loveable woman, (a quality of some vaunt in this world), but she was a sound Christian and an excellent wife, cards of strong recommendation wherewith to enter upon the other. An epidemic that ravaged this quarter of Ghent took her from me when Simeon was but a year old.

BONA. I well remember it, and all who knew her felt her loss.

BALTH. (*affected, yet resigned*) Ah, well, well! Providence willed, then so be it, for she left us reason to hope that our loss was her gain. But in the matter of my son, you think me too indulgent, eh?

BONA. I say not so in tone that's positive; I merely hint that youth has indiscretions.

BALTH. And age suspicions, oft founded on its own experience. Now I warrant me, Master Bonaventure, that you, whose gravity might make an owl seem gay, could rouse a boon companion into glee with tale of many a freak.

BONA. There may be in the journal of my memory some entries of the kind, but 'tis a folio to which I care not now to turn.

BALTH. Ah, your days are gone by. You no longer knock down the guard, smash lamps, or are found at daybreak sleeping in a gutter unable to puzzle out a reply to that irresolvable question, "How came you so?"

BONA. You are hard upon my youthful errors, Master Merx, they were but dwarfs, though you outstretch them into giants. But 'tis not of their like or other follies that I charge your son. I do but proffer counsel purely meant, that being now of age enough, he be received a partner into trade, and in its conduct take an active share.

BALTH. (*reflecting*) Hum! (*after a short pause*) I give all credit to your friendly meaning, but Simeon's over young, let him enjoy his youth. The partnership is ready whene'er his disposition bids him wish it. He'll nothing lose in finding out the world's intricate ways. And in young Theodore Mauville, his cousin on the mother's side, he has an able pilot to steer him safely through.

BONA. True, if experience bring wisdom in its train (for he has travelled far therein) and purchased knowledge at his fortune's cost.

BALTH. 'Tis for such inadvertence that he is now a leather-seller's second clerk, next to yourself, our worthy number one. His mother was my Catherine's sister, and in fair memory of them both I must not leave her son to penury. And then withal he's cheerful, gay, amusing, replete with anecdote, and most important to my boy, whose life seems nought without him.

BONA. Ay, each is ever with the other. Things are not ripe then for a change. You thought of some advancement for young Schulmann.

BALTH. 'Twill come anon, good Bonaventure, when t'other change takes place. The youth's reliable, and hitherto has guarded well the house. No woman sleeps herein, she who prepares our meals and beds, departs at night and leaves its charge to him. But now my hour is up, (*they rise*) I have to meet a merchant in the square of Calendar upon the purchase of uncurried hides. Anon, good Bonaventure, I'll return to count such cash out as my purchase calls for. *Exit, L.*

BONA. Go you to your market, I'll to my books. If you are an adept in the art of amassing money, Master Merx, I am afraid your son is in training to become equally so in that of scattering it. However deep the well, it may withal be drained. But let us hope the gold your massive coffer boasts, a goodly heap to have and look upon, may not be doomed to dwindle worthlessly. *Exit, L.*

Enter SIMEON and THEODORE, L.

SIMEON. (*entering*) Unlucky still! 'tis strange and sad. In our last stake I'd every confidence, 'twas risked in faith of calculations called infallible. It seems, howe'er, the vaunted table of good chances is woefully misreckoned.

THEO. Nay, good cousin, the table's not in blame, it does but give you probabilities from long experience gained, and which besides, show reason in their face. Take one to wit. It tells you, that if black turn up in seven successive throws, 'twere safer, seven to one, to cover red. And so with you it fell, as the table bade you, covered red, but black turned up again. What may be said thereto but this? 'tis a slippery prank of that strange jade, called Fortune.

SIMEON. A slippery prank indeed! a freak that mulct me in a thousand florins fine.

THEO. Well, well, whoe'er pays court to Fortune must shape his mind to suit with her vagaries. Her frowns are soon forgotten in her smiles. The jade's exacting though, and needs a constant wooing.

SIMEON. Would that were all. Nor must her votaries be constant only in their worship—of more importance still, they must be well supplied. Her temple doors are closed against all empty wooers.

THEO. Hum! true! how stand we then? how reckon up our present means to carry on the suit?

SIMEON. Our present means are *nil*. The thousand florins that I lost this day are my next quarter's allowance forestalled. Mark that unhappy word, forestalled!

THEO. That word proclaims with trumpet tongue that it *must* be regained.

SIMEON. Must is a potent word, yet 'tis not always answered to. And you, my friend, may *must* it long enough, before my empty pocket yields supply to that imperious call.

THEO. An empty pocket! among all negative evils positively the superlative, the worst looked upon, the last pardoned. Fill up the gap, and instantly.

SIMEON. Fain would I, could I master deeds, as you can call up words. Fill up the gap indeed, when all I have to fill it with lies in this hollow hand! (*holds open hand*)

THEO. Tut, man, you have cash at will, and plenty.

SIMEON. (*astonished*) Where?

THEO. In yonder chest.

SIMEON. That chest! It holds a store of wealth, I know, but 'tis my father's, 'tis not mine.

THEO. 'Tis hoarded up for you, it will be yours, and you can make it so whene'er you list.

SIMEON. How?

THEO. By joining him in trade. The proposition waits but your assent. Resolve your mind thereto, meantime take in advance a trifling loan from out the common stock.

SIMEON. A loan.

THEO. 'Twill quickly be repaid. 'Tis fortune's turn to smile, and in thus using it, you make the idle cash industrious.

SIMEON. But with such plenteous pocket as my father keeps me in, I need a bolder face, ere I can dare to ask him for a loan.

THEO. What need to ask it? What you have lost, a throw will restore fivefold, the borrowed sum will be at once returned, and those now hungry pockets rejoice again in more than wonted plenty.

SIMEON. I do not comprehend you, cousin; you labour at an end to guess at which o'erstrains my wildest thought. Your words come forth as from a battery that's masked; I see not whence they are aimed, nor at what mark they point.

THEO. Their whence is this—they come from the regard and love I entertain for you. Their aim is to release you from the dark brake in which you are entangled. That safe——
(*points significantly and pauses*)

SIMEON. (*in doubt and curiosity*) Well?

THEO. (*continuing*) Contains not less than twenty thousand florins. Two thousand borrowed would be scarcely missed; and then, when speedily restored, no wrong will have been done, nor meant.

SIMEON. (*reflecting*) True, but I am not partner yet, and therefore have not access. My father holds the key, of which no counterpart exists.

THEO. (*significantly*) And if there *should* exist a counterpart?

SIMEON. If there should! Those words are strange, and yet significant. Oh, if there should, I know not into what excess I might be tempted. My case is desperate; I would not for ten thousand worlds my father knew how deeply I have dipped in play; his confidence would be for ever lost.

THEO. It would, for he is stern in things of right or wrong.

SIMEON. He must not know it, Theodore. Oh, I would risk life itself to come out scathless from this horrid coil.

THEO. You would not then hesitate (*significantly*) to borrow a thousand or two, (*seeing SIMEON start*) just for a day or so, from yon well replenished coffer?

SIMEON. That coffer! 'twere a startling deed to do, e'en if it could be done. But in what purpose do you hint at this? Why name what cannot be? E'en as I told you now, my father has the key, and there's no counterpart.

THEO. And as I asked you then, and now repeat—should there exist a counterpart?

SIMEON. (*gazing at him*) There is a meaning in your words.

and looks at which I dread to guess, yet yearn to know. Out with't at once. What would you have me know?

THEO. That to your father's key—that treasured key which never quits his side—there is a counterpart.

SIMEON. A counterpart! art serious, cousin Theodore? and does my father know that such an implement exists?

THEO. He neither knows, nor in the slightest way suspects it. I would not for the wealth of Ghent he did.

SIMEON. In whose possession is it?

THEO. In mine.

SIMEON. In mercy's name, how came you by it!

THEO. I'll tell you, cousin, and if you blame me, still bear this in mind, 'twas to serve you I ran the dangerous risk. 'Tis, as you know, your father's wont to slumber after dinner. One special day, oppressed with toil, his sleep was deep and heavy. This was my opportunity. I ventured cautiously to raise the key then dangling at his side, and took a fair impression of its wards in wax. You shudder.

SIMEON. I do.

THEO. And yet 'tis late to think. Deeds, not thoughts must save us from destruction. Will you borrow this money?

SIMEON. Shall I be able to repay?

THEO. Is Fortune ever frowning and perverse? No, no, her lengthened course of frowns must now in turn relax, and change to sweetest smiles.

SIMEON. But such an act's rebellion against law.

THEO. There is a proverb held as past dispute, "Necessity knows nought of law." Now, our necessity is pressing, menacing, and will not be denied or trifled with.

SIMEON. 'Tis true—alas! too true—but yet to rob a parent is a monstrous deed.

THEO. Granted—to rob. But I have yet to learn that loan and robbery is one. Do justice to yourself and your intent, and give the deed its name—a loan.

SIMEON. Well, well, a loan then let it be, and surely as it is the first, so surely shall it be the last.

THEO. Of course, (*aside*) first crimes are always meant to be the last. (*aloud*) To business then. Where's Bonaventure?

SIMEON. (*goes to R. door and looks out*) Engaged in business with a customer.

THEO. Good; he's safe then for a while. And now for Schulmann, our youth-of-all-work, the steady-going model. We call him young Morality, and well he earns the name. How few would stint themselves, like him, to keep an aged mother in needful comforts that her years require. We must dispatch him on an errand, while he's about the house each moment: its fear of interruption.

SIMEON. True—call him, Theodore.

THEO. (*at L. door*) Schulmann!

Enter SCHULMANN, L.

Well, young Morality, how wags this whimsy world with you? In ancient jog-trot style, no doubt: your days of top and taw gone by, you've cast the jovial and put on the sage.

SCHUL. My occupation is incessant, and to be followed well, leaves little time for idleness or thought on other matters.

SIMEON. Yet there is one on which at times you think—your mother.

SCHUL. That is a duty, and a solemn one.

THEO. (*scoffingly*) You're pious, young Morality, and——

SIMEON. Peace, Theodore; the virtue that we practise not let us, at least, respect.

THEO. Good,—to our business. Go to the merchant Bonnemann; ask him if letters came for us in this day's Paris packet, then bring them straightway hither.

SCHUL. It shall be done in all dispatch. *Exit, L.*

THEO. Another peep at Bonaventure. (*looks out at side door*) Still fully occupied, (*looks out at window*) and Schulmann's on his way. The opportunity is golden, and gold shall be its produce. (*produces key*) Look hither.

SIMEON. Nay, ask me not to look. What must be done, do you and quickly. I will watch at yonder door.

(*goes to watch at L. door; THEODORE opens the coffer and takes out two bags, each marked, "1000." He puts one into his doublet, the other upon the table, locks the coffer, taps SIMEON on shoulder, and points to the bag on the table*)

THEO. Behold, the seed is here, the harvest is at hand; that bag I prophecy, will bring before the midnight hour, two more of greater worth.

SIMEON. So, may you be a prophet good and true. Come on!—a challenge now to Fortune.

THEO. And may she nobly answer it. (*touching the bag from his pocket as he follows SIMEON—aside*) The labourer is worthy of his hire. *Exeunt, L. door.*

After a short pause, enter BONAVENTURE, R.

BONA. So, young men, scarcely entered than out again. Pleasure seems in high demand—business may go begging. Well, well—if the master be content, why should the servant rumble? I may wish to see the current in another course: but as I cannot turn it, I must e'en look on and say nothing.

Chorus of Street-Minstrels without, L. (this is ad lib.)

Let's merrily sing, life wears away ;
 Light-hearted we'll live, sirs, while in it we stay ;
 We'll laugh, be jolly, be free and gay,
 We know not the hour, sirs, we know not the day.
 Then folks of all ages, young and grey,
 A fig for old Care, keep the goblin at bay ;
 With goblet in hand—hip, hip, hurra !
 We know not the hour, sirs, we know not the day.

As chorus ceases, enter BALTHASAR, L. door.

BALTH. So, worthy Bonaventure, the minstrel world gives sign of life, and business seems to take the cue. Our bargain soon was closed—(*gives papers*) There are the memorandums for entry ; and while you book them, I'll withdraw the cash.

BONA. Good ! I'll take them to the counting-house, and post them off at once. *Exit, R.*

BALTH. A goodly bargain this, of English hides. Now to count out the cash. (*holds up key with intricate wards, which is hanging by a chain at his side*) Come forth my friend, and guardian of my wealth ; you keep my money, and in return I take good care of you. We are ever seen in company, like truest friends. Long last our mutual care, and when I need your services no more be faithful to my son as you have been to me. (*opens coffer, puts forth his hand to take out money, but casting a look within at the same moment, starts and withdraws it*) Merciful heaven ! Do I dream ! (*as continuing to count*) ten, twelve, fourteen, sixteen, (*with surprise and a look of incredulity*) eighteen ; no more ! Oh, I could swear, sans slightest peril to my soul, that there were twenty. (*runs to R. door and calls*) Ho, Bonaventure ! hither man, and quickly.

Enter BONAVENTURE, R.

You know not what has happened here ; you would not, could not think it. I must tell it you, but of this I am sure, that *you* are not the thief.

BONA. (*starting*) The thief, sir ? is there then a thief ?

BALTH. I tell you, 'tis not you, old man ; you need not start, it is not possible you could have robbed me !

BONA. Robbed you, sir !

BALTH. You see this large key, so cleverly fashioned ? You know it, don't you ?

BONA. Know it ! I've seen it daily for years, but never touched it.

BALTH. I know that, Bonaventure. Well, this is the key of my coffer. It never leaves me ; by day it is chained to my

girdle and by night it rests beneath my pillow—and yet my coffer has been opened.

BONA. Oh, sir, your coffer!—and is the loss great?

BALTH. Two thousand florins.

BONA. It must have been done in the night.

BALTH. But how is it the thief did not empty the chest? How is it that he took only the tenth part of its contents?

BONA. O sir, this is terrible. The thief must have hoped your eye would not discern the loss.

BALTH. As you said, old man, the robbery must have been in the night. I suspect Schulmann, and yet, with his apparent honesty, I blame myself for such suspicion.

BONA. Schulmann! the cunning rogue. And yet he has the look and manner of one who scorns all wrong.

BALTH. I wish I could carry my suspicion elsewhere; but it is he only who could have entered my chamber and have taken the key.

BONA. But, sir, we must not proceed lightly in so serious a charge.

BALTH. I will try this youth. (*steps heard*) Hark! I hear him on the stairs! keep silence for the present—I will afterwards explain! (*shuts coffer*)

Enter SCHULMANN with letters, L.

SCHUL. (*presenting letters*) From the Merchant Bonnemann, by the Paris mail—he sends with them, remembrance and respects.

BALTH. (*taking them*) Good! have you seen my son within the hour past?

SCHUL. I left him here, sir, with his cousin Theodore.

BALTH. No matter. Hark you, Schulmann, I sleep this night at Alost, and I do not return till to-morrow. At what hour my son and his friend may return I know not.

(*begin to lower lights gradually*)

SCHUL. They'll find admittance readily, whate'er the hour may be.

BALTH. We know your punctuality. You then will remain alone with the two mastiffs. No stranger (*delivers these words emphatically*) can approach the house without their joint and fierce alarm, and as for entering it, the trial's fit for lunatics only. (*lights lower*)

SCHUL. True, sir, with Hassan and Muley your house is safely guarded.

BALTH. Take care, however, to put the iron bars behind the doors. We shall remain a few moments: when you hear us go, close the door after us and make all fast.

SCHUL. It shall be done.

BALTH. Bring us lights, then close the window and retire. (SCHULMANN *bows and exit, L.*) On his departure I'll tell you what my project is, (SCHULMANN *re-enters, L., with two candles which he places on the table, then closes the window—lights up as he enters*) That will do, good night.

SCHUL. (*bows respectfully*) Sirs, good-night. *Exit, L.*

BALTH. Now, Bonaventure, this is my intent, and if the robbery be repeated 'twill give the author up beyond all doubt. In going down we'll slip into my room, I'll leave my key upon the bed, a fact which you shall witness. None but young Schulmann has a right to enter; he must go in to close the window. Then if we're robbed again, there cannot hang a doubt on who's the thief.

BONA. That's true, but should there be no robbery!

BALTH. Then we must cast about for other proof. But this first trial it were well to make, and heaven, I trust, will point the guilty out, that innocence bear neither blame nor penalty. I will not go to Alost, as I said, but will return in secret. The interim I'll pass with you till we come back together.

Exeunt, L.

(*after a moment's pause, the noise of a door shutting is heard—another short pause—steps are heard and SCHULMANN enters, L., the key of the coffer in his hand*)

SCHUL. 'Tis strange that Master Merx, so careful of this key, should leave it on his bed. What will he think on missing it? I never until now beheld it from his side. Well, if it be a charge of such anxiety to him, I'm doubly bound to hold it in my utmost care. (*ties it to his girdle*) There 'twill be safe till bed-time, I'll place it then beneath my pillow, and who robs me of it, shall rob me first of life. (*knock heard, L.*) A knock! I must be careful whom I may admit. (*opens window and calls*) Who knocks?

SIMEON. (*without*) Good Schulmann, 'tis I, and my cousin Theodore.

THEO. (*without*) All right, young Morality. Be quick! don't keep us waiting at the door.

SCHUL. I will descend immediately. *Exit, L.*

Door heard to open, then shut—steps—then enter SIMEON, THEODORE, and SCHULMANN, L. door.

THEO. The night is cold and piercing.

SCHUL. What hour is it, then?

THEO. Eleven, high time for young Moralities to don their nightcaps, eh?

SIMEON. Is my father gone to bed?

SCHUL. He is at Alost, he sleeps not here to-night.

THEO. (*aside to him*) Capital! as if the old buck had managed it expressly for our service.

SCHUL. (*observing them*) You look disordered, sirs, and pale; is aught the matter?

THEO. No, nothing, we are a little exhausted with cold and fatigue. Rest will make us all right.

SCHUL. You'll surely have some supper, you must be in want of some—there's a cold chicken left.

THEO. Thank you, no; give us a pitcher of Geneva and a couple of glasses.

SCHUL. Is that all? you are wrong to take nothing but that—you surely cannot be ill?

SIMEON. No, we supped at Alost. I wonder we did not meet my father there. Get what we asked, and then retire to bed.

SCHUL. (*going to a cupboard—takes jug and two glasses from cupboard and sets them on table*) Is there aught further I can do for you?

THEO. Nought further, young Morality; so say your prayers right piously, once for yourself, twice for us, and then to bed.

SCHUL. I will, sirs, good night.

(*the moon is seen in the horizon and rises slowly. THEODORE looks after SCHULMANN, who goes off, R.*)

THEO. All right, he has entered his room—the house is our own. (*reseating himself*) Our luck is desperate; we have nothing remaining, and we want one thousand two hundred florins.

SIMEON. We will pay nine hundred, and ask a little time to meet the rest. (*they drink*)

THEO. Time for debts of play! debts of honour! What mortal ever heard such proposition? Why, man, they are not debts of honesty to be put off, perhaps denied in toto. No, no, they must be paid, or we are for ever ruined.

SIMEON. My father will find out all; we have already taken two thousand.

THEO. Very well! let us take five more. We shall regain our losses and make good the deficiency without any one being the wiser. Your father does not count the contents of his chest.

(*during this dialogue and what follows they drink frequently.*)

SIMEON. But if he should?

THEO. He is from home. We shall come back to-morrow evening. I have a calculation which assures us of enormous gains, but it requires a good sum.

SIMEON. But if we lose?

THEO. Impossible.

SIMEON. Suppose it.

THEO. Then you would write to your father and confess all. shall sacrifice me, and he would forgive you.

SIMEON. I can't make up my mind to it.

THEO. Talking and thinking are alike in vain. It must be done—the moments are precious; 'twere madness only that could let them slip.

(opens the coffer, takes out five bags and places them on the table—while so engaged, the R. door opens and SCHULMANN enters unseen by them)

SCHUL. *(aside)* I forgot to say that Paris letters await them in the box. *(aloud, and seeing what is going on)* Merciful heavens! *(rushes and throws himself on his knees before SIMEON)* Ah, Mr. Simeon!

THEO. *(letting fall two bags he was in the act of extracting)* Discovered! *(momentary tableau)*

SCHUL. Ah, Mr. Simeon, what are you about? Does your father let you want money? And will you for this wretched lucre lose your soul for ever? Oh, if you do not shudder at the crime, kill me. I cannot, living, suffer you to move one florin hence. Then if you take my life 'twill be set down the work of robbers' hands. No one will know it, I am here alone, your father will not have the misery to find his son a thief, and may heaven by speedy penance from my death release your soul.

THEO. *(enraged)* He is right, he must be killed. *(draws a dagger)* He would ruin us, we must compromise him. *(rushes towards him)*

SCHUL. Oh, my poor mother!

SIMEON. *(rushing hastily between them)* Hold!

THEO. Back, madman! if we kill him, your father will not accuse us, and we shall be able to carry off the whole contents of the chest.

SIMEON. *(boldly)* I will not have him killed; you shall kill me first! Let us go.

THEO. Since all is found out we have nothing to care for, Take then these bags, and let us go if you will. *(offers two bags to SIMEON who takes them with an air of indifference)* Go on. I'll follow.

SIMEON. No, I will not leave you alone with this youth; he has too little to expect from your mercy.

THEO. Nonsense! I tell you we are compromised, and must acquit ourselves. Listen to me—

SCHUL. No, no, Simeon, hear him not. Eve listened to the serpent; had she closed her ear 'gainst his deceitful tongue, we had not then been lost. This man will destroy you body and soul for ever. His are the serpent's wiles, the serpent's lying tongue. Hear me, who love and honour you, hear me for your mother's sake, who as a guardian angel cherished mine in her distress, and rescued her from misery. The debt of gratitude

I owe her memory I would repay with life, and for the mother that she saved to me, I'll die to save her son. (*a pause during which SIMEON seems contending against powerful emotion—THEODORE is filling a bag from the contents of the coffer*)

THEO. (*at the end of the pause coolly suspending the operation, aside*) Well promised, young Morality, we'll put you to the proof anon.

SCHUL. (*continuing*) O, if your mother's memory has not the power to touch your heart, think on your father who is yet in life. Or, if you will, cast off that tie of nature—suppose it ne'er existed—then what a benefactor will you see in him. But he is both, and in his double character, what limit to the gratitude and duty that you owe? Do not, in heaven's name, I pray you! do not rob your father. If you want money, ask it of him; confide your troubles to him, he will not reject you. And if he did, I would beseech him to listen to you, and would give him my future wages—I would serve him for nothing the rest of his days. (*emphatically*) Do not murder your father! (*SIMEON starts and looks enquiringly at him*) for to find you out a thief would be his certain death.

THEO. (*to SIMEON drawing him on*) Come on, I have the booty here all safe. (*shows a full bag*) We will go to Paris, and write to your father; he can't help forgiving.

SIMEON. Oh, Schulmann will not betray us; he'll say robbers have broken in. Adieu, Schulmann, pity and pray for me.

SCHUL. (*rushing between them as THEODORE draws him off*) It is you, you, who are ruining me and my young master. For whom shall I accuse? Were I to name you, you would have your support in the son of the house. (*looking towards the window, starts and points to the moon which, having ascended, is seen behind the cross on the top of the steeple, giving the appearance of a black cross upon its surface*) Ah! behold yon threatening sign, the vengeance of heaven is even now preparing to fall upon you.

(*THEODORE and SIMEON start at seeing the cross on the moon.*)

SIMEON gazes on it in terror. THEODORE, perceiving the cause, after a moment's gaze, bursts into a scornful laugh)

THEO. Ha, ha, ha! So young Morality, you think to fright me with a sign like that, but I've a mind above all superstitious fears. If you would make me quail, get up some spell more potent than is yonder prodigy that's passing even now.

SCHUL. So you despise that sign; mark well my words, it will avenge me yet.

THEO. Psha! Come, Simeon, come.

(*as THEODORE is drawing SIMEON away, SCHULMANN rushes between them; THEODORE with violence throws him into*

the centre of the room—he falls senseless; they exeunt, L., having extinguished the lights—a short pause—loud knocking heard L.)

BALTH. (*without*) Ho, there! Schulmann! No answer; what can this mean? (*calls again*) Schulmann! Stili silent. Run, Bonaventure, for a smith, and let him force the door. Go, some of you, and fetch the Provost hither. (*noise of the murmuring of a crowd*—"How now?" "What's the matter?" "Ah, the smith!" "Here's the Provost," &c.—*crash, and approaching steps*; BALTHASAR *rushes in L., followed by BONAVENTURE, the PROVOST, and PEOPLE with torches—lights up*—BALTHASAR *rushes straight to coffer, which he finds open and empty*) Ah, I am robbed! this time I'm robbed of all—of eighteen thousand florins! Where is Schulmann?

BONA. (*seeing him*) Here on the ground, (*looks at him*) apparently insensible.

BALTH. (*seizing him by the arm and waking him up*) Ho, there, young viper, rouse you up! look round and gaze upon your vile work.

SCHUL. (*scarcely conscious*) My master! (*looks round, seeing all about*) Good heavens! what means all this? (*sees the coffer open—with a shriek*) Ah! I remember now.

BALTH. No doubt, such work will not be readily forgotten.

SCHUL. Oh, sir, you cannot surely think me guilty. I'm innocent, indeed, indeed I am!

BALTH. That we shall see. Provost, your prisoner. (*GUARD stand on each side of him*)

SCHUL. A prisoner! may heaven look down in pity upon me, and save my hapless mother! (*tableau and drop*)

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*A gambling saloon in Paris—Dice and card tables, Chandeliers, &c., a table with wine, glasses, &c.*

KEDGE, *as Lord Flushington, seated at a small table, drinking, his dress outré.*

KEDGE. Excellent claret, if I can tell a grape from a damson. It shames the slush of our boozing ken in Lant Street. Ah! Cornelius Kedge! you've made a tip-top swop of it—you have. London's overrun with your exploits; Paris

has room for them in plenty. Kedge, the sharper! Kedge, the swindler! Kedge, the pickpocket! the distinguished titles under which I am recognised in England, I kicked off on leaving my native shore, like a pair of worn out shoes no longer fit for walking in, and here I am, cutting away among the swells of Paris, as my Lord Filucius Flushington. An excellent game it is too! the city is full, and flat-fish catching in prime season.

Enter JEAN the waiter, c.

JEAN. Beg pardon, my lor' (*presenting a card on a silver tray*) a compatriot—an *autre mi lor Anglais*.

KEDGE (*taking card with vulgar affectation*) Ah, eh, no! merely an honorable—the Hon. Lumkin Lightlaw (*aside*) Another nibble, no doubt. (*aloud*) Ah! I—aw—don't exactly know the name, but show him in. (*Exit Waiter*) We shall make something of him, never fear.

Re-enter JEAN introducing SAMSON SNOOZE, as the Hon. Lumkin Lightlaw, JEAN bows to both and exit—KEDGE having risen to meet him, the two sharpers survey each other with much minuteness.

KEDGE. (*the card in his hand*) The Hon. Lumkin Lightlaw, as per card, I presume.

SNOOZE. The same, your lordship's devoted and very humble, for I believe, I have the honour of addressing my Lord Filucius Flushington.

KEDGE. The same: as a countryman most welcome. And if in this strange city of Paris, I can be of any service, or assist you in the profitable disposal of your time or money, (*they as mutually bow, KEDGE abstracts SNOOZE'S purse and transfers it to his own pocket*) I shall be most happy to do it.

SNOOZE. And I, on my part, assure your lordship, I shall be most happy (in the utmost of my power) to return the obligation. (*they again bow ceremoniously, during which, SNOOZE abstracts KEDGE'S watch, with chain and seals*)

KEDGE. I don't doubt it a moment. And now may I ask, to what motive we are indebted for the honour of your visit to this gay place?

SNOOZE. Pleasure, merely pleasure! England is a stale worn out, unprofitable place. Having become utterly tired of it, I took my leave; luckily as it happened, in the nick, for I heard that some of my friends, annoyed at the thought of my departure, had taken measures to prevent it.

KEDGE. Singularly enough! the same circumstance happened to myself. I was everywhere in request; indeed, such was the dudgeon manifested at my retirement, that the Lord Mayor

commissioned his officers to seek me out, and prevail on me to return.

SNOOZE. You felt of course that the idea was a bore, not to be entertained a moment.

KEDGE. Certainly not! So importunate were my friends upon the subject, that every outgoing vessel was ordered to be searched.

SNOOZE. Tyranny! friendship indeed! downright tyranny.

KEDGE. Precisely, and as such being determined to resist it, I feed a fisherman, donned his jacket, and sailed over one fine night in his smack.

SNOOZE. Excellently done! no doubt a longer stay would have driven me into a similar expedient (*putting his hand to the pocket in which the watch is, and apparently anxious to get away*) But I beg pardon, your lordship will excuse me for the present, I have not yet made my arrangements. I shall have the honor of seeing your lordship on my return.

KEDGE. Certainly, but there's one little favour I must beg of you to do for me before you go.

SNOOZE. By all means, my lord, what is it?

KEDGE. You'll have the kindness just to hand me over my watch.

SNOOZE. (*startled*) Watch! your lordship's watch! Really, my lord, I—I don't—

KEDGE. Understand! Yet it's plain enough. Hand me over my watch, that you slipped into your right waistcoat-pocket, a few moments ago. (*points to pocket*)

SNOOZE. Waistcoat pocket. (*puts his hand on to it*) Well, there is something strange in it, sure enough; what can it be? (*takes it out*) Why, it's a watch, I declare! by what inconceivable chance could it have found it's way into my pocket?

KEDGE. By a natural chance enough; I should have been more surprised had it managed to keep itself out.

SNOOZE. I'm dumbfounded! (*giving it*) There it is.

KEDGE. (*taking it*) Thank you. One good turn deserves another. Do me the favour to accept of this purse? (*hands the purse to him*)

SNOOZE. A purse! with the greatest plea— (*looking at it with astonishment*) Am I awake? (*rubs his eyes*) My purse, that Oh! I could have sworn was safe in this pocket! (*slapping his pocket*) I smell a rat as big as a weazel.

KEDGE. Do you? I smell another as sharp as a ferret.

SNOOZE. There was but one man in England could beat me in practice as a conveyancer—that was Con. Kedge.

KEDGE. And the acknowledged second to Con Kedge was, Sam Snooze. I never saw him before, but I'm jolly mistaken if I don't see him now. Sam, my boy, how are you?

SNOOZE. Quite the kick, Con, never was better. How's your noble self—noble lordship, I should say? (*bowing with mock ceremony*)

KEDGE. Spruce and prime, as your "honourableship" beholds me. Well met! good luck has brought us together, let us then make the most of it in Co. like sociable fellows. I've done a neat stroke of business here, single-handed as I am.

SNOOZE. You do me honour, friend Kedge. It will be the boast of my life, to have worked in team with a leader of such blood. But how stands the game? any prime heads worth bringing down, eh?

KEDGE. Take a chair, my boy. (*they sit*) We'll hold a council of war, and sketch out a plan of the campaign. I've a couple at bay here, a pair of Flemings, fresh from Ghent. They sport freely, and have been allowed to pick up a little by way of lure.

SNOOZE. Nothing like tickling the trout, it gratifies the simple fish till the hand is ready for the grasp.

KEDGE. Precisely so; the tickling season is over, and you are just in time to assist in the take. This is the night appointed for the revenge. I have prepared all, not forgetting a plentiful supply of this potent auxiliary—wine. (*holds up bottle*)

SNOOZE. Generalship, that. An excellent ally, when thrown into the enemy's ranks, but be careful to keep it clear of your own.

KEDGE. Be well assured in that. We begin in mirth, end how we may. An English student from Cambridge joins, and a German officer, a Colonel von Blusterbob, as he calls himself. I suspect him, we must watch him closely.

JEAN. (*without*) This way, my lors, this way! (*opens door, R.*) The saloon is ready.

Enter SIMEON, THEODORE, BLUSTERBOB, BARON DE BEAUMONDE, and LACON LESTER—KEDGE receives them and introduces SNOOZE, C.

KEDGE. Gentlemen, a valuable addition to our party most opportunely arrived from England—the Honourable Bumpkin Brightsaw.

SNOOZE. (*aside—nudging him*) That cogno won't do, old chap—look at the card.

KEDGE. (*correcting himself*) Beg pardon, I was thinking of another friend—an absent one. (*looking at card*) The Honourable Lumkin Lightlaw. (*they bow to SNOOZE—he returns it*) And now allow me. (*introducing each to SNOOZE as he gives the name*) Herr Simeon Merx, of Ghent—Herr Theodore de Mauville, of Ditto—Monsieur le Baron de Beaumonde—Herr Von Blankerino de Blendendorzen de Blinkensteinen de Blub-

berblazes Blusterbob—Mr. Lacon Lester. And now, gentlemen, for a little exhilaration to raise up our spirits to the business of the evening.

KEDGE. (*to BARON*) I'm engaged, Baron—what say you to a party with my friend here?

BARON. Mais certainment, de tout mon cœur. (*bowsto SNOOZE*)

SNOOZE. (*to KEDGE—aside*) I don't spatter their lingo here. Did he call me a cur?

KEDGE. Psha, man, no! Keep yourself in, don't be ready to take offence. Come, gentlemen, the wine waits, but time runs. To table! (*as they are sitting down*) And may Fortune favour the bold.

SIMEON. (*glass in hand*) Ay, let the jade do that, I shall be content, for I mean to stake deep.

ALL. (*glass in hand*) May Fortune favour the bold!

KEDGE. Our worthy friend, the collegian, has promised to enliven us with a song.

LACON. Classical, of course. No common-place, but right philosophical and prim. I mean, in my lyric, to disabuse you of vulgar errors respecting certain ancient philosophers, and give a true key to the oddities and eccentricities attributed to them. Gentlemen, it shall be a thoroughly blended fusion of the lecture and song.

Sings.

Old Plato was reckoned divine.

He wisely to virtue was prone,
But had he not tippled good wine
His merits had never been known.
By wine we are generous made,
It furnishes Fancy with wings,
Without it we ne'er should have had
Philosophers, poets, or kings.

Chorus. By wine we are generous made,
It furnishes fancy with wings,
Without it we ne'er should have had
Philosophers, poets, or kings.

Diogenes, surly and proud,
Who snarled at the Macedon youth,
Delighted in wine that was good,
Because in good wine there is truth.
'Till growing as poor as a Job,
Unable to purchase a flask,
He chose for his mansion a tub
And lived by the scent of the cask.

Chorus. By wine, &c.

Heraclitus would never deny
 A bumper to comfort his heart,
 But when he was maudlin would cry
 Because he had emptied his quart.
 Though some are such flats as to think
 That he wept at man's folly and vice,
 'Twas only his custom to drink
 Till the liquor flowed out at his eyes.

Chorus. By wine, &c.

Democritus always was glad
 To tiddle and cherish his soul;
 Would laugh like a man that is mad
 When over a good flowing bowl.
 As long as his cellar was stored
 His liquor he'd merrily quaff,
 And when he was as drunk as a lord
 At those who were sober he'd laugh.

Chorus. By wine, &c.

THEO. Good! Our friend has certainly amused and enlightened us. A refresher! (*filling glass*) and then to business.

KEDGE. Agreed! Now, gentlemen, glass in hand! Hip! hip! hurra!

ALL. (*glass in hand*) Hurra! (*they toss off the contents and rise*)

THEO. (*to SIMEON as they advance*) Which are to be the tools, cards or dice?

SIMEON. We'll try a hand first, if that fail us, then for the "two small rattling bits of bone."

KEDGE. Good! To the table then.

THEO. (*aside to SIMEON*) We'll double as we go on, luck must be ours at last. (*aside*) At all hazards I'll secure three thousand to myself.

KEDGE. How shall we begin—single-handed or in partners?

SIMEON. We'll make a start at single-hand—I rather fancy myself against you. I have shown you how to win on more occasions than one,

KEDGE. True, you have been lucky, an item that fills up a blank perfectly perceptible in my pocket.

(*KEDGE and SIMEON sit opposite each other to play at cards—THEODORE standing behind him—while they are thus occupied the BARON and BLUSTERBOB advance forward*)

BLUSTERBOB. Vat say you, mine vriend, shall we shuffel von another togeder vid der cards?

BARON. Ah! oui, mon colonel, I am not com for do nothing, non. (*they sit down to play*)

LACON. (*advancing with SNOOZE*) Then I have the honor of

being in company of the second son of the late distinguished Chancellor, Earl Lightlaw?

SNOOZE. (*aside after bowing assent*) Glad to know it, wasn't aware of the fact.

LACON. I assure you, I quite prize this accidental encounter. Your elder brother, the present earl, was my fellow collegian.

SNOOZE. Indeed! (*aside*) A jolly lucky job it wasn't myself.

LACON. Many a merry anecdote has he told me of your bygone frolics. According to him you were a sad dog in your juvenile season of life.

SNOOZE. Well, I was always set down for a rum 'un. People would have me so, and I thought it a pity to put them out in their reckoning.

LACON. You haven't forgotten that little trick of yours that you got so soundly flogged for, eh?

SNOOZE. (*shrugging shoulders and wincing*) Blest if I have, or ever shall, ugh! (*shuddering—aside*) He must have heard of my conveyancing the alderman's purse from his pocket to my own while on his way to a city feast. (*aloud*) Why, who in this mortal world ever told you of that?

LACON. Your brother, to be sure. He gave me the whole history of your slipping into the housekeeper's room when she was making tarts, substituting basket salt for powdered sugar, and rubbing cayenne into the apricots after you had pricked holes in them with the old lady's darning needle.

SNOOZE. O that was it, was it? I thought you meant a very different affair.

LACON. He told me of many such. But the frolics of the boy are forgotten in the gravity of the man. Your father was an excellent lawyer.

SNOOZE. And no mistake about it. The bullyingest Old Bailey counsellor as ever was—and they can bully above a bit, can them chaps—warn't never up to half his dodges. Why the members of the profession looked up to him as a father and a guide.

LACON. No doubt, no doubt. Well, he reached at last the highest point that man, in that course of life can attain.

SNOOZE. He just did. (*makes the sign of hanging*) and no sooner had he reached that eminent post than down he dropped, gave a brace or two of shakes, and all was over.

LACON. True, his death followed quickly upon his elevation. "Sic transit gloria mundi."

SNOOZE. You are quite right, it was on a Monday. Well, he was surrounded by his friends, there warn't one as didn't go to see him off.

SIMEON. (*dashing cards violently on table*) Confusion! ill luck again! are the cards bewitched? I thought I might

have safely sworn the game was in my hands. Well, well, I double the stakes, it can't last for ever.

THEO. True, a change must take place, perseverance will be crowned with success.

SIMEON. Go on, I stake two thousand.

THEO. And here's two thousand to cover it. Shuffle, I deal.

(SNOOZE watches the game)

LACON. (*aside*) There's something wrong here, I'll try him a little further. (*to SNOOZE*) I shall be happy to see you at a future time in London; perhaps you will oblige me with the whereabouts.

SNOOZE. Whereabouts I live you mean? Oh, certainly. (*aside*) You don't think I'm going to invite you to the boozing ken, do you? Hookey! (*aloud, giving a card*) There's my card.

LACON. (*looking at it*) Your card, sir!

SNOOZE. My card.

LACON. (*reads*) "Pledge and Pop, Three Balls-alley; coat, 10s."

SNOOZE. (*hastily re-taking the card*) I beg pardon, that's my uncle's card; rich old hunks that uncle of mine—regular grub and no mistake. (*gives another card*) This is mine.

LACON. (*reads*) "Dashington-terrace, Bayswater-road." (*aside*) There's no such place. I'm now convinced the fellow is not what he seems to be, and the other betrays too little of the manners and sentiments of English nobles to impose on one accustomed to their society. There is a deeper game on foot than mere cards or dice. The baron and colonel I suspect are shams, appendages to make up the staff of the house, and fight its battles when the sword is needed. I came to learn, and I suspect I shall here meet with a lesson.

Enter JEAN, with tray, c.

JEAN. (*presenting letter on tray*) Monsieur Lacon Lester.

LACON. My noble self. (*takes letter, JEAN bows and exit*) I left word at my lodging to send hither in case of any message. (*looks at letter*) From Ghent, I have but one correspondent there—perhaps it's an invitation, a glance will tell. (*opens letter and looks over it*)

SIMEON. (*flushed with rage*) Unfortunate still! Brandy, Theodore, a glass of brandy. (*THEODORE gives it, he drinks it off at once*) Ah! no more cards—dice! dice! (*plays frantically*)

LACON. (*aside, having looked over letter*) What is this? (*reads*) "An affair recently transpired has thrown this city into a state of excitement. The rich leather seller, Balthasar Merx, during the absence of his son and nephew, whose present locality is

unknown, has been robbed of eighteen thousand florins. A youth, named Schulman, resident in the house is charged with the theft, his trial comes off in a few days, and nothing short of his condemnation and execution is expected."—Poor Balthasar Merx, his son and nephew waste his substance abroad while his servant robs him at home. I must let this thoughtless young man into what is going on at Ghent,—but hold, as a precautionary measure, I'll send a notice to the police. Work may be needed for which we are not prepared. (*writes*)

SIMEON. (*excited*) Ha! two thousand won back, so fortune has turned—double—four thousand, I put down four thousand.

KEDGE. I cover it—throw.

LACON. (*folding and sealing letter*) Under cover to my landlord, it will not be suspected. (*rings*)

SIMEON. Lost again!

Enter WAITER, C.

LACON. (*to JEAN*) Send this at once to my landlord, 'tis close at hand as you see by the address. (*points it out to him*)

JEAN. Oui, Monsieur.

Exit, C.

SIMEON. (*rising*) This run of ill luck wearies and excites me. Theodore, take you the dice, in your hands our fortune may take a turn. (*gives way to THEODORE, who continues the game, LACON meets SIMEON, and conducts him forward*)

LACON. (*to SIMEON*) Young man, a word with you, and one of serious import.

SIMEON. (*coolly*) You are a stranger, sir.

LACON. Not so much a stranger, but that I know somewhat of you and your affairs. I have just received a letter from Ghent, which contains the relation of an affair in which you are intimately concerned; your father has been robbed, and to a large amount.

SIMEON. (*starting*) Ha!

LACON. Read this letter, and while you are so occupied, I'll watch the game. You are among sharpers; it is my firm belief that we are the only honest persons in the room. (*goes to play-table*)

SIMEON. (*aside*) Honest! that word's a poniard, searching to the heart. Honest! (*bitterly*) And I'm a thief! away, dread thought, away. What says this letter? (*reads it to himself with increasing agitation*)

THEO. (*at play*) Now for the final throw, all or nothing, the stake is fourteen thousand florins.

KEDGE. Throw; (*THEODORE throws*) eight.

THEO. Confusion!

KEDGE. (*having thrown*) Twenty, 'tis mine! (*going to take it up, LACON prevents him*)

LACON. Not so, 'tis none of yours, the dice are false.

KEDGE. } False!
SNOOZE. }

LACON. Ay, and I'll prove them so. (*snatches them up and pockets them*) Let them not touch the money, they are sharpers, swindlers——

KEDGE. Ah! have at him—ho! friends, (*to BARON and COLONEL*) to the rescue.

LACON. (*to SIMEON and THEODORE*) They are four to three, no matter, keep them at bay awhile, and all will yet be well.

(*BARON and COLONEL rise, draw swords, and take side with KEDGE and SNOOZE—SIMEON puts the letter into his pocket, draws and advances to support LACON and THEODORE—the three endeavour to keep them from seizing the stakes on the table.*)

THEO. We are unused to weapons, but we will do our best.

KEDGE. Come on, curs, I will annihilate you all.

LACON. Indeed! my brave bully, we will see that; if you dare cross swords with me, let the general quarrel rest on the issue.

KEDGE. So be it. Let me be what I may, you will find I am no coward.

(*they take off their coats, and a regular set duel takes place—LACON conquers and wounds KEDGE, who falls—a party of POLICE burst open door and disarm all present, then stand on guard at the door—LACON produces the false dice, which he gives to the OFFICER in command, he then signifies by gesture that the stakes belong to SIMEON on one side and KEDGE on the other—the OFFICER takes up Kedge's part, and signs SIMEON to take the other—He does so, and holding out the letter to LACON, calls THEODORE's attention to it, and says emphatically, "To Ghent," as he points to the door—Tableau and*)

END OF ACT THE SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Palais de Justice, Ghent. Interior. Three seats for Judges somewhat elevated on a dais. Bench and desk for Clerk and Counsel, in front of the Judge's seat, R.; bar for Prisoner placed diagonally, R.—one for Witnesses opposite, L.—benches for Spectators placed longwise of the Stage, leaving the first entrances open. Over the Judge's seat a large window through which is seen the steeple and Cross of St. John's.*

Enter SIMEON and THEODORE, L.

THEO. What, here—into the court of justice itself? Are you mad, Simeon, or am I worse than mad to have ventured at your advice into its very jaws? In faith, I shall begin to repent me of having accompanied you back to Ghent.

SIMEON. What have you to fear?

THEO. Everything! You will answer with your life, you say, that Schulmann will not betray us. Yet, if he should, your life will not save mine, which would be more than perilled by the stripling's indiscretion. What if they put him to the torture?

SIMEON. Torture! Think you, I would suffer that blameless youth to bear the punishment I've merited? No, no, it shall not be.

THEO. Suppose the infliction threatened, what will you do?

SIMEON. What I shall still do, whether it be threatened or not. Return, like the prodigal, to my father, humble myself before him, and confess the truth.

THEO. You'll save yourself and hang me?

SIMEON. No, I will acquit you and take on my own responsibility all blame. There are twelve thousand florins yet unspent, and these I must return.

THEO. (*mockingly*) Conscientious youth! (*aside*) It's more than I'll do with the four thousand I've privately secured.

SIMEON. Oh, 'twas indeed an act of Providence that placed the English student in our way. Where our career had stopped, or what had been its end, I shudder when I contemplate.

THEO. I'm not so aguish; no common-place event could force a shudder out of me. A fine career was open to us, to which your scruples put untimely end.

SIMEON. And that career, had not my scruples stopped it, had brought untimely end on us.

THEO. Well, well—let that be how it may, we'll leave the

fanciful and come to fact. The trial will shortly begin—we cannot stop here. What's to be done?

SIMEON. I'll send a message to my father, seek an interview, and own the fact.

THEO. Take my advice. While the twelve thousand are yet in your hands, bid Ghent a long farewell.

SIMEON. I dare not. On this act eternity depends. It must be done while I have grace to entertain the thought; or if I let the moment slip, a like may ne'er return.

THEO. Well, as you list; but yet, bethink you on the adage, "*Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat.*" If you are mad enough to risk the ordeal, I am not. I feel that I am standing upon hot ashes, and shall make instant preparation for the worst. There is no time to be lost.

SIMEON. What will you do?

THEO. Give me your solemn word that you will send a messenger to me, with the result of your attempt, the moment you have made it.

SIMEON. I give you my solemn word. Where will the messenger find you?

THEO. You see yon steeple, crowned with the iron cross—the instrument that is to punish me? at least, so said the prophet, young Morality.

SIMEON. I see it, Theodore—from every part of Ghent 'tis visible. I also, with young Schulmann, bid you to beware. Not, as in his agony he did, of you particular and sacred emblem, but of that most demoniac vice—the mockery of holy things. If mere neglect bring punishment, what may he look for who to his gross neglect adds insolence and mockery?

THEO. Why you are growing serious, Simeon; I shouldn't wonder if, after all your racketing, you disappoint your father's hopes, study for the church, and turn monk. But to our present purpose. I will wait under that steeple with a fleet horse, saddled, and all ready for immediate flight in case of an unfavourable turn.

SIMEON. Agreed. I guarantee no moment shall be lost in giving timely warning if danger should impend.

THEO. Farewell then, here we part, mayhap for ever. (*shake hands—aside, going*) four thousand florins to the good! let come the worst at home, on their foundation will I raise in France a noble fortune.

Exit, L.

SIMEON. (*looking after him*) Avaunt! thou'st been an evil spirit in my path, and to the last, in thy vocation true, wouldst tempt me to destruction. How bitter the confession I must make to my o'erdotting father! his son a thief! the basest, most ungrateful, worst of thieves! a coward too, abandoning a

faithful heart to suffer for his evil deeds! Oh! what an overwhelming load of crime one slight offence, one base propensity unchecked has led me into! But heaven is merciful, sincere repentance yet may cancel all. *Exit, L.*

Enter CURATE, PROVOST, *two* GUARDS *with* SCHULMANN *prisoner, R.*

PROVOST. Certainly, Reverend Father, we leave you at your request, some moments with the prisoner. He has hitherto shown much obstinacy and refuses to admit his guilt, strong and overwhelming as are the proofs against him. Let us hope that your exhortations will soften his heart and induce him to relieve justice by a full and faithful disclosure. (*to GUARDS*) Let one attend at each door while the Curate remains. When he has done with the prisoner, reconduct the youth to the ante-room to await his trial. *Exit, R.*

CURATE. (*beckoning forward SCHULMANN as GUARDS take their posts at the first Entrances, R. and L.*) It is an awful crime, unhappy youth, of which you stand accused. If you committed the theft laid to your charge, where is the stolen money?

SCHUL. Heaven is my witness that I have nothing, and have taken nothing.

CURATE. Then who committed the robbery? You know the robbers, name them.

SCHUL. I cannot.

CURATE. And the key found hanging to your girdle?

SCHUL. Is not the key by aid of which the robbery was effected.

CURATE. No; it seems a duplicate was in the lock. Who made that duplicate?

SCHUL. I know not, I am innocent.

CURATE. I call upon you in the name of heaven, as you have regard to the truth, answer me. Do you know the robbers?

SCHUL. Father, I am innocent.

CURATE. Then, you will name the culprits?

SCHUL. Father, I cannot! Heaven knows them.

CURATE. Enough. My child, if you are innocent, heaven will not desert you. May its arm support and give you good deliverance. I will be present at your trial to seize on any chance or plea that may assist you. Go, and abide in hope. (*to GUARDS*) Re-conduct your prisoner.

GUARDS conduct SCHULMANN out, R.

CURATE. Some deep and fatal mystery lies under this. I cannot think the youth is guilty, and yet I see no hope of exculpation.

Enter ADVOCATE, L.

ADVOCATE. Good morrow to our Reverend Curate.

CURATE. Good morrow, Mr. Advocate.

ADVO. How are matters with the prisoner?

CURATE. I have had an interview, and have pressed him hard with questions. He still denies his guilt.

ADVO. (*coolly*) Of course; they always do until the torture wrings out truth.

CURATE. (*indignantly*) Torture! Ah! Mr. Advocate, that process is the foulest stain that e'er disgraced our code. A confession extorted by the most refined of agonies is no proof of culpability. And then, suppose the sufferer guiltless, how awful the responsibility on those who torture out the lie upon the plea of which they sentence innocence to death.

ADVO. Hum! ha! laws are laws, and we lawyers who live by the laws are bound to cling to the laws. Therefore, what the law says is law, we lawyers must avow and maintain to be law.

CURATE. But laws ought surely to be made in furtherance of justice.

ADVO. Justice! we advocates know nothing about it—we ignore the word. We have a case to bring to a successful issue—a battle to fight, which we win if we can. If the argument is for us, on we dash, straight as a dart; if against us, we shamle along, scattering sand in profusion, confounding facts, scaring witnesses, mystifying judges, working truth and falsehood into an inextricable tangle, and leaving its unravelment to that excellent friend, par excellence, of the advocate, "the glorious uncertainty of the law."

CURATE. (*aside*) Thank heaven, I'm not an advocate. (*aloud*) But is this just and honest?

ADVO. Honest! a strange notion that. You remind me of a witness I was examining a few sittings ago. (*gives question and answer in different tones*) "Pray, sir," said I, "do you know the last witness?" "I've known him many years." "Hum! is he an honest man?" "I thought him so once, but an event happened him some time ago of such a nature that neither he nor any other could be honest after it." "That's extraordinary! did he get into the company of thieves?" "If that had been all, I should have had some hope of him." "Bless me! into what honesty-killing company can the unfortunate man have fallen?" "Well, sir, he got into a lawyer's office."

CURATE. A discerning witness that. (*bell tolls*) Ha! that bell summons the Court together; I shall remain to watch the progress of the trial.

ADVO. And I to do my duty as the Advocate of the State.

Enter PROVOST and two JUDGES, L. 1 E., who occupy seats on the dais, R. C., PROVOST in centre; CLERK, who takes lower desk; ADVOCATES, JAVELIN OFFICERS and SPECTATORS; ADVOCATE-GENERAL takes seat; CURATE among the SPECTATORS, L.

PROVOST. Advocate-General, are you prepared to proceed with the trial of the prisoner?

ADVO. I am, my lord judge.

PROVOST (to OFFICER) Let him be placed at the bar.

(SCHULMANN is placed at the bar, R.—two OFFICERS remain with him)

ADVO. (*rising, C., brief in hand*) "My Lords Judges, the prisoner Schulmann is charged with having, by means of a false key, opened the money coffer of his master, Bathazar Merx, leather seller, at the house called the 'Brown Bear,' in Antwerp-street, and abstracting therefrom the sum of eighteen thousand florins. He is furthermore charged with having secreted, or passed away by the hands of an accomplice or accomplices, the said sum of eighteen thousand florins, and with contemptuously refusing to give any account of the stolen money, or to name the said person or persons, his accomplice or accomplices in the robbery." (*puts down brief and speaks*) If it meet the approbation of my Lords Judges, I purpose proving the situation in which the prisoner was found on the night of the robbery, a position which establishes the fact of his guilt beyond all moral doubt. We will subsequently examine him personally, as to various circumstances connected with this flagitious affair.

PROVOST. We approve that course. Proceed!

ADVO. The first witness I shall call is the clerk of Mr. Merx, by name, Bonaventure. (to USHER) Introduce him. (USHER brings BONAVENTURE into the box, L., opposite SCHULMANN) Before I begin the examination it may be as well to say there are certain facts in this case, which being allowed by the prisoner, need only to be recapitulated in his hearing. He admits that he was alone in his master's house on the night of the robbery. He asserts that he did not hear the knocking at the door from having fallen into a swoon. He allows that no trace of violence shows the house to have been broken into. That the coffer was opened by means of a duplicate key, and the money in question removed. But he denies possession of this money, and all knowledge of its locality. He admits that there were robbers, but denies that he was their accomplice. It has been asked—what motive could the prisoner have for this robbery?

That I will proceed to show. Bonaventure, has not the prisoner a mother living?

BONA. He has.

ADVO. What is her condition in life?

BONA. She is poor and infirm, subsisting chiefly on the bounty of my master, and her son's wages.

ADVO. Where does she live?

BONA. At Zotteghem, three leagues from Ghent.

ADVO. You went to see her, I believe, after the robbery?

BONA. I did, in company of an officer. We searched the cottage for the missing money, but none was found.

ADVO. Hum! What appearance does the dwelling present?

BONA. It is a perfect model of cleanliness and comfort, surpassing in both respects the abodes of many in higher grades of life.

ADVO. You were in fact surprised at the more than neatness, the almost elegance of the furniture and appointments.

BONA. Certain I am, that I little expected to see such in the dwelling of one so poor.

ADVO. (to COURT) Here then, we have a fact that I may describe in all conscience as replete with suspicion. How happens it, that the cottage of a poor woman, dependant upon charity, is furnished in elegance and taste? I answer this question with another. Is it not an acknowledged proposition that no one ever falls at one swoop into grievous crime? Certainly it is, and hence springs a reasonable assumption, that the accused prepared himself for this extensive theft by a series of previous, petty, undiscovered larcenies. That he had been in fact robbing his master upon a small scale, until impunity begat its usual offspring, audacity. (to BONAVENTURE) How long has the accused been in the service of Mr. Merx?

BONA. He has been in his service from boyhood.

ADVO. What had been his conduct?

BONA. Up to this discovery, most exemplary—in fact he was held up as a pattern to the youth of the neighbourhood.

ADVO. Of course, the mask fitted, and was gracefully worn. Is Mr. Merx in Court?

BONA. Not yet, I left him in conversation with his son who is just returned from Paris.

SCHUL. His son!

ADVO. I am not aware that his evidence would throw any further light upon this hitherto unfathomed affair. (to BONAVENTURE) You may leave the box. (to COURT) But if we have not yet reached the depth of this transaction, we have gone far enough to prove the prisoner's guilt. But this is not sufficient; justice is yet unsatisfied; therefore, as the prisoner obstinately refuses its requirements, persisting in concealment

of the names of his accomplices, and the place to which the stolen money has been conveyed, it becomes my painful duty in vindication of the law to move the application of the torture.

(first signs of an approaching storm—light rain, gradually increasing, and darkness increasing with it—occasional flashes of lightning—thunder after each flash, at first distant, then approaching)

SCHUL. Torture! good heaven! is such a monstrous crime then possible? Can justice be so foully mocked e'en in her sacred court? What wicked, vile, sophisticated plea can gloss this horror o'er? Torture the innocent to wring a lie from out his agony. 'Twere hard to say if such proceeding be more mad or wicked. What torment that the subtlest human fiend may from the hell of his invention conjure up, can drag out knowledge from the sufferer that he himself has not. I know not where the money is. I am no thief, therefore I have no accomplices. *(thunder, lightning, rain, and darkness still increasing)* And you, *(to ADVOCATE)* whose aim it is to hunt me to the death, because the law so calls upon you—have you not tortured me already in foul perversion of the truth to gain my condemnation? Have you not turned the very virtues that adorn my poor but honoured mother, to venom'd darts wherewith to sting her son to death? As the base blow-fly lays its filthy eggs upon the finest meat, so drop you down your foulest slanders upon the priceless virtues of the poor. I shunned the pleasures youth enjoy to keep my mother's home, while she in her economy made it a home that I might love and live in when it had pleased kind heaven to call her to a better. Things saved and kept by strict economy, you fear not to proclaim must needs be had by theft. But heaven forgive the slander as I forgive it now. I have no friend on earth—all human agency seems turned to my destruction, and yet I fear not. There's one above on whom I ever have relied; in him I trust, and he will give me good deliverance. *(vivid lightning, lowl thunder—a ball of fire strikes the Cross of St. John's, and throws it down—all start up in alarm)* Behold! the Cross of St. John's is stricken down. Ha! I remember a warning that in the excitement of mental agony escaped me. Merciful heaven! can it have been fulfilled? *(storm clears away)*

Enter BALTHASAR and SIMEON, L. 1 E.

BALTH. Justice, my Lord Provost, I come for justice.

PROVOST. It is to adminster justice that this Court is assembled.

BALTH. Then let the innocent be released. The culprit, under heavy chastisement from the arm of heaven is being brought hither to confess his crime and die!

PROVOST. The culprit.

BALTH. Theodore de Manville, stricken down by the fall of the Cross of St. John's, has confessed himself the robber and the forger of the duplicate key. Schulmann is innocent, and sixteen thousand florins of the stolen money are returned. (*murmurs heard without*) Here is the hapless youth.

(THEODORE is brought in on a litter, from L. 1 B., and set down in centre of Stage—he is pale and wan.)

PROVOST. (*advancing to him*) Theodore de Manville, do you confess yourself the perpetrator of the robbery of which that youth stands charged?

THEO. (*faintly*) I do, upon myself I take it all.

PROVOST. Enough. (*to OFFICER*) Release the prisoner.

(SCHULMANN is released, he goes to BALTHASAR, who offers him his hand)

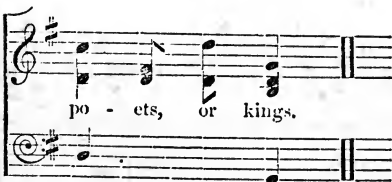
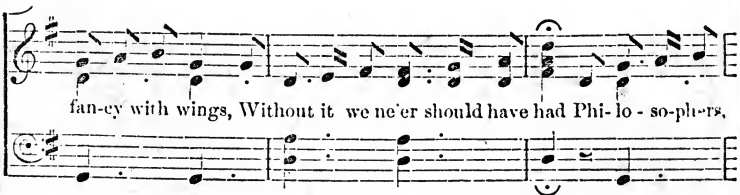
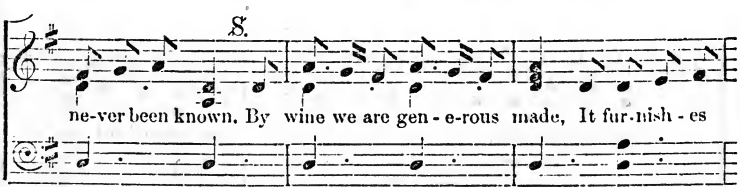
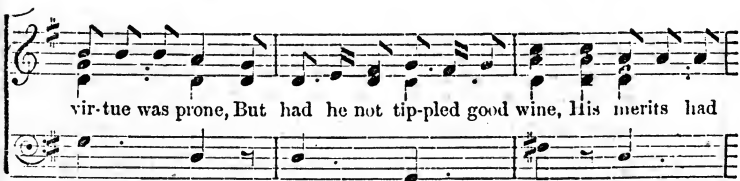
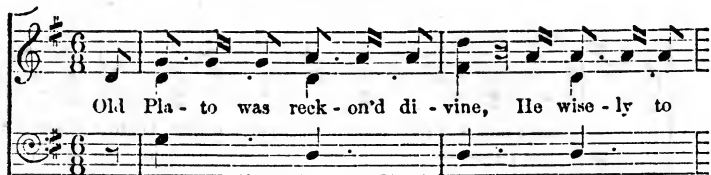
THEO. (*to SIMEON, who has approached*) I have exculpated you, keep your secret and repent. (*seeing the CURATE, draws near*) Father, death is upon me, my moments are few, can there be mercy for a wretch like me?

CURATE. There's mercy, son, for all who truly seek it, and in the reparation made is sign of true repentance. (*holds a crucifix to him*) Take this and clasp it to your breast. (*he does so*) My friends. (*turning to the others*) the dying man implores the Church's aid. Kneel, and while he outpours his hidden sins in humble penitence, pray that his repentance be accepted, and his crimes forgiven.

(*all kneel as the CURATE inclines his ear to listen to the confession of THEODORE—tableau—solemn music, and*)

Curtain.

Students' Song in "The Cross of St. John's."

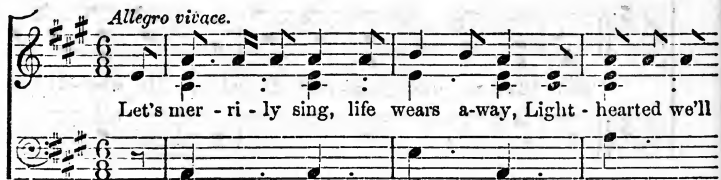


Repeat from 'S. in Chorus.

*Three more verses, 8 lines each;
Chorus after each.*

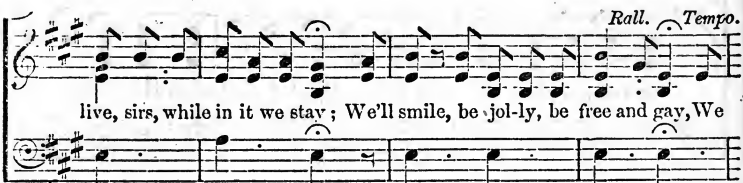
Minstrels' Glee in "The Cross of St. John's."

Allegro vivace.

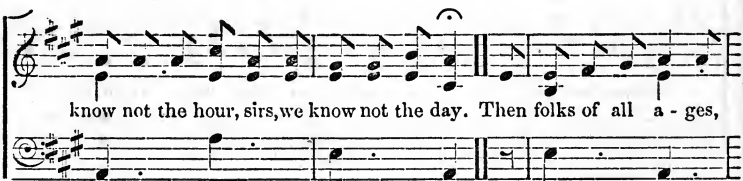


Let's mer - ri - ly sing, life wears a-way, Light - hearted we'll

Rall. Tempo.



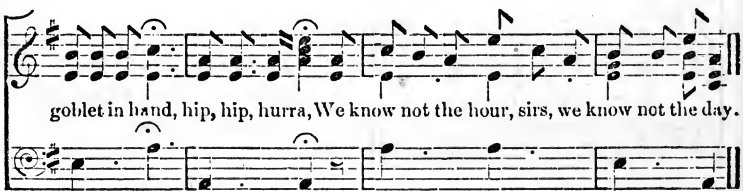
live, sirs, while in it we stay ; We'll smile, be jol-ly, be free and gay, We



know not the hour, sirs, we know not the day. Then folks of all a - ges,



young and grey, A fig for old Care, keep the goblin at bay, With



goblet in hand, hip, hip, hurra, We know not the hour, sirs, we know not the day.

THE
BLIND BOY.

A Melo-drama,

IN THREE ACTS.

BY

JAMES KENNEY,

AUTHOR OF

*"Matrimony," "Raising the Wind," "The Alcaid," "Illustrious
Stranger," "Ella Rosenberg," "Love, Law, and Physic," &c.*

Adapted for Male Characters only,

BY

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
89, STRAND, LONDON.

THE BLIND BOY.

*First performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden,
on December 1st, 1807.*

Characters.

STANISLAUS (<i>King of Sarmatia</i>).....	MR. MURRAY.
EDMOND (<i>the Blind Boy</i>)	MRS. C. KEMBLE
PRINCE RODOLPH (<i>presumptive Heir to the Throne</i>)	MR. BRUNTON.
OBERTO (<i>a Farmer</i>)	MR. FAWCETT.
ELVINO (<i>Son of Oberto</i>)	MISS NORTON.
STAROW (<i>a villainous Confidant of the Prince</i>)	MR. CHAPMAN.
KALIG (<i>a reduced Gentleman</i>)	MR. FARLEY.
MOLINO (<i>a Villager</i>).....	MR. LISTON.
HIGH PRIEST	MR. THOMPSON.
LIDA (<i>Duchess of Lithuania</i>)	MISS BRISTOW.
<i>Guards, Attendants, &c.</i>	

Polish Costumes.

KING STANISLAUS.—Crimson velvet tunic, and purple robe, handsomely trimmed; shoes and rosettes, fur cap and regal circlet.

EDMOND.—Fawn-coloured tunic, trimmed with blue; blue pantaloons, plain beaver hat, laced boots.

RODOLPH.—*First Dress*: Green hunting dress. *Second Dress*: Handsome tunic, fur hat and feathers, white pantaloons and red boots.

OBERTO.—Brown jerkin, trimmed with fur; pantaloons and boots, hat trimmed with fur.

ELVINO.—Green tunic trimmed with black, tight pantaloons, black boots, square Polish cap.

STAROW.—Green hunting dress, boots, Polish hat and feathers.

KALIG.—*Ibid*.

MOLINO.—Amber-coloured tunic, trimmed with blue and brown; blue pantaloons; beaver hat and feathers, boots.

HIGH PRIEST.—Bishop's dress of ceremony.

PEASANTS.—Drab tunics and pantaloons.

HUNTERS.—Green hunting dresses.

GUARDS.—Scarlet uniforms.

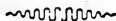
COURTIERS.—Gold laced tunics and pantaloons, hats and feathers, boots.

PRIESTS.—White surplices.

SERVANTS.—Blue tunics, shoes and stockings.

LIDA.—Handsome white satin dress, embroidered with silver; long white veil, &c.

THE BLIND BOY.



ACT I.

SCENE.—*The Farm-yard of Oberto—the house, R.—an outhouse, ornamented with creeping plants, built against another building of the farm, L.—at the bottom of the yard, a small river from R. 3 E. to L. U. E., over which is a rustic bridge from R. 4 E. to L. 3 E., in very bad repair; steps to descend, L. C; in the distance, a rural view—on a stand, under a window, near the door of the house, R., are some flower-pots—a rustic seat under the window of the outhouse—chairs and a small table—curtain rises to soft music, expressive of the harmony of a fine summer morn.*

Enter ELVINO, from the house, R., with a small watering-pot, which he puts down, examines the flowers under the window, and takes away one of them.

ELVINO. These flowers already begin to fade; while Edmond is away, I will replace them with some which are but newly blown. (*Music—he brings a pot from the house in the place of the one he takes away*) Poor Edmond cannot see their varied tints, but their sweet perfume will assure him that Elvino ceases not to think of him. (*MOLINO sings without, L.*) Here comes that foolish fellow, Molino.

Enter MOLINO, L., with a whip.

MOLINO. (L. C.) Ah! there's my young neighbour—how do you do to-day, Master Elvino?

ELVINO. (R. C.) Very well, thank you; I hope you are well, too, Molino.

MOLINO. Odsbobs, I am as well as a young man can be expected to be, who hasn't had his breakfast, and is as hungry as a hunter. Is neighbour Oberto at home?

ELVINO. No; my father went out at sunrise to look after the reapers in the field, near the wood.

MOLINO. And where's the young blind boy? Is he still in the arms of Orpheus, as our schoolmasters say?

ELVINO. Edmond is with my father.

MOLINO. Ha, ha! what business, now, can he have there, I wonder? Poor lad! it's all the same to him, whether in the open fields, or at the bottom of a well.

ELVINO. There, Molino, you are mistaken: though his eyes are not blessed with the brilliant light of day, his other senses more exquisitely feel the soft impression of the sun's first beams, and the fresh morning breeze, which breathes its fragrance around him. Even now, seated on a bank, near my father and his men, he sees them not, 'tis true—but he hears their cheerful song, their joyous tales, and our dear Edmond is happy.

MOLINO. I believe he is, indeed! a precious fool he'd be if he was not. He has plenty to eat, plenty to drink, plenty of sleep, and nothing to do—I don't doubt he is happy, "our dear Edmond."

ELVINO. Softly, Molino! think of the poor youth's misfortune. Instead of jeering at and mocking him, you should pity and sympathise with his affliction. (*looking towards R. U. E.*) Ah! I see my father coming towards the bridge.

Enter OBERTO, over the bridge, from R. to L. U. E.

OBERTO. (c.) Why, Elvino, the bridge has given way since I passed it this morning?

ELVINO. (l.) Yes; part of the parapet gave way just as the waggon had got over; but, my dear father—what! is not Edmond with you?

OBERTO. Don't be uneasy,—I left him with the reapers.

MOLINO. (R.) Never fear, if he has a mind to come alone, he'll find his way safe enough. I've often laughed to see how he clears the posts, bushes, and cart-ruts. Egad! one would think he had an eye at the end of his walking-stick.

ELVINO. Silence, Molino, I desire you.

OBERTO. What, angry with Molino?—that must not be; but, pray, neighbour; are you not going to Warsaw?

MOLINO. To be sure I am! Talking of that, you had better take advantage of my car. Gad! you should go to the city now or never.

OBERTO. Why so?

MOLINO. What! don't you know that all Warsaw will be turned topsy-turvy to-morrow. There'll be such fetes, feasting, and fiddling! and all to celebrate the marriage of Prince Rodolph, the son of our good King Stanislaus, with the Princess Lida, Grand Duchess of Lithuania. Oh! 'twill be a capital sight! Come go with me in the car; there will be room for

Edmond, too. I know very well you would have no pleasure without him. Poor lad! he'll not often find himself at such a grand to do. Such rich dresses! such illuminations! such—

OBERTO. All these would not be very interesting to Edmond.

ELVINO. My good Molino, we thank you; pleasures of this kind we do not covet.

MOLINO. You'll have a very great loss; for my part I love a jolly row and a good squeeze. *Exit, L.*

OBERTO. My dear son, the time has at length arrived when it becomes necessary that you should no longer be ignorant of the real circumstances of Edmond's introduction to our family, listen. *(they sit—OBERTO, R. C., ELVINO, C.)* I had been a soldier fifteen years when I married your mother. We had retired to a village near Gesna, and we lived there poor and miserably enough. One fine day we were sitting at our cottage door. You were then three years old, and playing near us, when a stranger arrived, followed by a woman who held an infant in her arms. He stopped and examined us attentively. You left your play, and ran to the woman, to let you kiss the child. The stranger observed you, and advanced to us,—“My honest fellow,” says he, “here is a purse contains five hundred pieces of gold—it is for him who will take charge of this child. Speak, will you have the infant and money?” My wife and I looked at each other, when you cried, “Yes, papa, do take it, do take the little baby, it's so pretty.” We accepted the proposal, but the stranger added one condition to it, that we should directly quit the village, and remove at least thirty leagues from Gesna. We took the child—

ELVINO. 'Twas Edmond.

OBERTO. And soon discovered he was blind. Our arrangements were soon made. We quitted Gesna, and settled in this village, four leagues from Warsaw, where, with the money which the purse contained, we bought this farm. My industry has made it prosper, and but for your mother's death—*(they rise)*

ELVINO. Oh, don't speak of that, dear father.

OBERTO. At that time Gesna was the residence of our sovereign. 'Twas not till some years after, that Stanislaus preferred Warsaw. Our being required to remove from the vicinity of the court, and the large sum which the purse contained, have often led me to suspect that Edmond might be the child of some great lord of the court, who, for weighty reasons, was compelled to make use of this cruel precaution. I have confided this secret to you, that in the event of accident to myself you may assume my station to Edmond. For the present it must be a secret from him, but at a future time he may know all.

Enter EDMOND, R. U. E., advancing towards the bridge, feeling with his stick.—Music, expressive of fear.

ELVINO. *(sees him on the bridge, with dread)* Oh, heavens!

OBERTO. *(calling)* Take care, Edmond—take care—you—

ELVINO. Silence, father! if you startle him, he'll fall. You're very safe, Edmond, but don't stir—wait for me. *(he runs to EDMOND, takes him by the hand, assists him over the bridge, leads him to the seat under the window, and sits by him, R.—Music—OBERTO places a chair near the table, L.—he goes in the outhouse, and returns with a book, pen, and ink, and seats himself at the table, L.)* My dear Edmond, how could you pass this dangerous bridge alone? Part of it has fallen in since the morning, and the rest scarce holds together.

EDMOND. I waited for you in the corn field, Elvino, you came not, and I was weary of being so long absent from you. Hark! Elvino, don't you hear the sound of the horn?

ELVINO. *(after a pause)* No, I hear nothing. *(goes up to listen)*

EDMOND. There is certainly some one hunting in the forest! There again! the huntsman's call distinctly.

ELVINO. *(listening)* I cannot hear it.

OBERTO. *(who has been listening)* Nor I, either—surely you are mistaken, Edmond.

EDMOND. No, father, listen—there again—the sound is louder; they come this way. *(horn)*

(ELVINO and his father listen attentively—the sound of a horn is heard at a great distance)

ELVINO. Edmond is right, father.

OBERTO. Yes, yes, very true. How fine his sense of hearing! *(horn sounds again)* I can scarcely hear it now, though it's so much nearer.

ELVINO. Perhaps 'tis the Prince Rodolph hunting.

OBERTO. Prince Rodolph! No, he has other game to hunt. He is to be married to-morrow.

ELVINO. I forgot; it can't be him.

EDMOND. I pity the lady who marries him, with all my heart; they say he's a most wicked young prince. He, like me, had the misfortune to be born blind; but Providence heard his parents' prayers, and restored his sight, while I alas! am left without sight or parents. *(EDMOND weeps, turns towards window, stretches out one hand, and places the other on his heart—soft music)* Where are you, Elvino?

ELVINO. *(goes to him quickly)* Here I am, Edmond.

EDMOND. Dear Elvino, thank you.

ELVINO. What, for Edmond?

EDMOND. For having ornamented my window with fresh flowers, Elvino?

ELVINO. What, can you perceive it already?

EDMOND. None of the attentions you bestow on me can ever escape my observation. Ah! Elvino, my friend! if you knew how sensible I am to them! 'Tis not the privation of an enjoyment I have no idea of, which makes me grieve at my misfortune, but I lament to feel the obligations I am under, without a possibility of returning them.

ELVINO. You love us, Edmond—that is an ample recompense.

OBERTO. The hunters come this way.

Enter MOLINO, L., he runs on bridge to look out.

MOLINO. Neighbour, neighbour, come and see, come and see! The hunters are coming out of the wood, and seem to take this way.

OBERTO. Well, let them come.

MOLINO. (*advancing*) Don't you know who it is? They say 'tis the Prince Rodolph, son to King Stanislaus.

OBERTO. Oh, if it's he——

MOLINO. This prince, by gum! he must be main fond of the chase, to be hunting so far from home, the day before he is to be married. (*from the bridge*) There! there! 'tis a wild boar they have killed. Lud, lud! how angry he is at it! Quick! quick! Come and see, Elvino! Come and see, Edmond!

EDMOND. (*smiling*) I thank you, Molino.

OBERTO. The silly fool!

MOLINO. Oh! I must, I must see the Prince Rodolph—that I must! (*on the bridge*) There, they are close by—there, they dismount! I'faith, neighbours, they are coming straight this way.

OBERTO. The deuce! I wish they'd take some other road.

Music—OFFICERS, HUNSMEN, &c., arrive on the other side, R. of bridge—RODOLPH, STAROW, KALIG and SUITE, pass the bridge, from R. to L., and descend by the slope, L.—*Music, horns, &c.*

RODOLPH. Are you the master of the farm?

OBERTO. (R.) I am, your highness.

RODOLPH. Well, my friend, you'll oblige me much by getting us some refreshment. The chase was long. I feel thirsty.

OBERTO. With the greatest pleasure, your highness. (*to ELVINO*) Go, my son, call Frank and his comrade—they will help you.

Erit ELVINO into house, R.

Would your highness please to sit here, or go into the large hall?

RODOLPH. We shall be very well here. (*sits at a small table, L.*) You have been a soldier, or I'm mistaken?

OBERTO. Yes, my prince; I served fourteen years, and I hope with honour, in the legion of Plosko.

RODOLPH. Your name?

OBERTO. Oberto—at your service, prince.

KALIG. (*L., aside*) Oberto! (*he looks around, sees EDMOND, and examines him attentively*)

Enter ELVINO, R., with a small jug and goblets, which he places on table, L.—Music.

EDMOND. (*apart, to ELVINO*) Come, Elvino, let us begone.

ELVINO. With all my heart.

ELVINO *takes his arm, and leads him to the door of the house, R., but stops to let two SERVANTS pass who enter with large jugs—OBERTO signs to them to help the HUNTERS and attendants.*

MOLINO. (*aside looking at RODOLPH*) Zounds! the prince drinks just like another man, I declare.

KALIG. (*taking MOLINO aside to R., with great agitation*) Is the young man who just left us, blind?

MOLINO. Oh, yes, that he is, he is blind with one eye and can't see out of the other.

KALIG. Is he son to this farmer?

MOLINO. No; but all as one.

KALIG. Um! um! (*aside, considering*) Oh, should this be him I seek! (*goes up c.*)

RODOLPH. (*rising*) Starow, my friend, e'en the pleasures of the chase afforded me no relief.

STAROW. (*L. c.*) Cheerly, my prince! 'Tis the fatigue of this long day's chase depresses you.

RODOLPH. No, Starow, no; 'tis not the body now complains, it is the mind disordered that weighs me down.

STAROW. Consider, sir, Lithuania's charming duchess soon will grace your bed. Her smiles will chase away intruding melancholy.

RODOLPH. Never, never! Oh, Starow, there is a being breathes this air, whose existence is poison to my happiness.

STAROW. (*half draws his dagger*) My prince, shall I—

RODOLPH. Officious fool! Think'st thou, if I could find this enemy to my repose, I should want thy feeble aid? No more! Starow, give orders to depart. (*STAROW turns towards the Suite—they advance—he gives his orders to depart—OBERTO*

approaches the PRINCE and bows) And there, my honest friend.
(*presenting a purse to* OBERTO)

OBERTO. Your highness, I hope, will not wound an old soldier's feelings, by offering payment for so slight a service.

RODOLPH. (*taking his hand*) Well, my brave fellow, I shall not forget your generous hospitality. Away.

Music—Exit RODOLPH and STAROW, over the bridge to R., followed by HUNTERS—KALIG remains—MOLINO follows with the PEASANTS, to see the PRINCE, L.—KALIG, after being assured that they are gone, approaches OBERTO, and looks at him attentively.

KALIG. Are we alone?

OBERTO. Why do you ask?

KALIG. I would speak with you.

OBERTO. (*astonished*) Ha! (*looks through the door, R., and then returns*) Speak on.

KALIG. Your name, I think, is Oberto?

OBERTO. It is.

KALIG. You lived in another village before this?

OBERTO. I did; at Urzena, six leagues from Gesna; but it's a long time back.

KALIG. (L. C.) 'Twas there that a blind infant was given to your charge?

OBERTO. (R. C. *uneasy*) What say you?

KALIG. Is that child still living?

OBERTO. Thanks be to heaven, yes! you saw him, as you came in; he was with my son.

KALIG. Yes, I saw him then.

OBERTO. Ah, sir, for pity's sake, tell me who were his parents?

KALIG. I am simply charged with a commission to you. For more than two years, I have made every search for you, but in vain. (*takes a parchment from his bosom*) This writing I have always carried about me, in the hope that chance might one day bring us together. It was to be given to you, in case the child entrusted to your care was living. The condition exists; then take the writing,—it is addressed to you. (*offers him the packet*)

OBERTO. (*taking it hesitatingly*) To me! Addressed to me! (*looks at the seal*) Ha! the seal——

KALIG. Of our late queen.

OBERTO. The queen! (*his hand trembles—the packet falls—*
KALIG *takes it up, and gives it to him*)

Enter ELVINO, from the house, R.

ELVINO. Father, breakfast is ready, we wait for you.

OBERTO. (*confused and endeavouring to hide the packet from him*) Very well, very well—I'm not hungry—go in, go in.

ELVINO. (*astonished*) What ails you, father? You seem uneasy—this stranger—

OBERTO. I'm busy. I tell you again, go in.

ELVINO. (*sadly*) Never did you treat me so before, father!

OBERTO. Heed me not, Elvino! (*embracing him*) Go in, my boy—go in, I beg of you.

He conducts him with affection to the door—Exit ELVINO, into the house, R., looking anxiously at his FATHER and KALIG.

Pardon me; now proceed. (*returning*)

KALIG. Then there—I have but one injunction more; it is to bid you read that packet without witnesses. Fare you well, Oberto.

OBERTO. Wait a moment. At least, I may read it before you.

KALIG. No; I must follow instantly to prevent suspicion. But, remember, if you have occasion to make a journey to Warsaw, beware of Prince Rodolph. My name is Kalig—remember it, Oberto! Seek me out, and at the hazard of my life, I will serve you. *Music—Exit over the bridge, to R.*

OBERTO. (*remains almost motionless*) My hand trembles! I dare not break the seal—let me breathe awhile! Oh, my dear Edmond, it is your fate which I am about to discover, and 'tis the Queen that—Courage, Oberto! a soldier and afraid!

Music, expressive of violent agitation—he breaks the seal eagerly—a pause—unfolds the packet, turns it in various directions, rubs his eyes, wipes his forehead, and at last reads—as he reads his surprise and emotion increases—he exhibits the most violent agitation.

OBERTO. Edmond, the son of Stanislaus! heir to the throne of Sarmatia! (*Music, expressive of his agitation*) But let me finish—(*endeavours to read*) there is a mist before my eyes—I can't see a letter! What, my Edmond—my dear boy, my prince? (*soft Music—his eyes fill with tears—he wipes them*) Come, come—I must be calm. (*Music—walks about in great agitation, with hasty strides*) What! the Prince Rodolph is no longer—Ha! this is no trifling matter.

(walks about as before—Music)

Enter MOLINO over bridge, running from R.

MOLINO. Any commands for Warsaw? I'm just going.

OBERTO. (*without heeding him*) Oberto, the fate of Warsaw, of the whole empire of Sarmatia, is this day in your hands. If you are silent, all remains; if you speak, all is changed. Say but a word—the truth comes out, and the crown—

MOLINO. (*approaching him*) Eh! what's that you say neighbour?

OBERTO. (*anxiously*) Were you listening?

MOLINO. (L.) I just came this moment, to tell you our car is ready, and to ask if you have any commissions. But what the deuce were you talking about, neighbour? the crown and Warsaw! 'Tis my belief that you were dreaming, with your eyes open.

OBERTO. Yes, yes; I—Did you never dream that you were some rich powerful great lord?

MOLINO. Oh, yes—yes; I often dreamed that I was become rich—very rich; and that I was going to town to sell our provisions in a coach and six; but, for all that, when I waked I was only Molino.

OBERTO. (*aside*) He has not heard me. Well, neighbour, I'm much obliged to you, but I have nothing to trouble you with. You must excuse me—but I have a good deal to do.

MOLINO. Good bye, neighbour. (*going, L.*)

OBERTO. (*calling him back*) Stay, Molino! (*aside*) We may take advantage of this opportunity. Can't you delay your departure for a few minutes?

MOLINO. Oh, yes—certainly.

OBERTO. Perhaps we may be inclined to go with you.

MOLINO. Gadzooks! will you? That will be mighty agreeable.

OBERTO. Well, my friend, return in a quarter of an hour, and we'll be ready for you.

MOLINO. I'll just go and put on the head of the car, and make everything snug for Elvino.

OBERTO. And for Edmond, too.

MOLINO. Edmond!

OBERTO. Yes, yes—Edmond. If he don't go—

MOLINO. Well, well—we'll take care of him too. (*aside*) There, there! neither father nor son can think of anything but Edmond.

Runs off, L.

OBERTO. I must go find my children.

Enter ELVINO, R., meeting his FATHER at the door.

Oh, Elvino—great news! Such news, my son! call Edmond to me.

ELVINO. (R.) Great news! You frighten me, father.

OBERTO. (L.) The news is good—very good. Call Edmond, I tell you.

ELVINO. Here he is.

Enter EDMOND, R.—ELVINO leads him forward.

OBERTO. (R., *runs to embrace him*) My dear Edmond!—I forgot. (*falls on his knees*) Oh! my prince, permit me to be the first to offer you my homage.

EDMOND. (R., *puts his hands upon him*) On your knees, Oberto!

OBERTO. (C.) This is the great news, my children. Look, my son, look at this packet,—it's the hand of our late queen. Rodolph is not, but Edmond is, the son of King Stanislaus.

EDMOND. I?

ELVINO. (L.) Edmond?

EDMOND. Gracious powers, explain!

OBERTO. Yes, yes, I'll read you the letter: listen to me. (*reads*) "Oberto,"—you see, she knew my name—"Oberto, if this packet"—Here, Elvino, take it yourself, I shall never get through it. (*crosses, L.—he gives ELVINO the letter.*)

ELVINO. (C., *reads with emotion*) "Oberto, if the child, entrusted to your care at Urzena, be still alive, learn his destiny from this. I have deceived the people; I have deceived my husband. Rodolph is not my son, nor is he the son of Stanislaus. My child was born blind. The bitter disappointment my husband experienced inspired me with the guilty design of deceiving him by a supposed miracle. I had the barbarity to suffer my infant to be taken from me,—that infant, whom you, Oberto, so readily received."

OBERTO. Read, Elvino, read!

ELVINO. (*reads*) "The Palatine of Rava had a son, the same age as mine. It was reported he was dead, and believed so. The child was named Theobald;—'tis Rodolph."

OBERTO. Let me finish. (*reads*) "I feel my last hour approach; I shall never behold my child, but, if the officer who is entrusted with this packet should perchance discover your retreat, I command you, Oberto—(*raising his voice*) I command you, in the name of the good powers who watch over the safety of Samartia, instantly to divulge the truth. To your prudence I leave the manner of disclosing it, and of restoring to the true heir of the throne, that name, and those rights, of which my guilt has so long despoiled him. Farewell! Judith, of Bohemia, Queen of Sarmatia." I shall obey you, madam. (*bows respectfully over the packet.*)

EDMOND. My father—oh, let me destroy this writing.

OBERTO. My prince, my king that will be, what mean you?

EDMOND. Say Edmond, my father—always Edmond! Oberto, keep the strictest silence; let Rodolph reign, and let me be still the happy son of Oberto, the brother of Elvino.

OBERTO. Keep silent!—No, my dear children, the Queen's commands are rendered sacred by her death; they must be obeyed: she calls upon me from the tomb—"In the name of the gods, who watch over the safety of Sarmatia, I

command you instantly to divulge the truth."—Come, my prince, let us away.

Enter MOLINO, hastily, smacking his whip, L.

MOLINO. Come, neighbour, everything is ready.

Music.—OBERTO hurries EDMOND and ELVINO off reluctantly—*Exeunt, L.*

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*A magnificent Temple, with a flight of steps leading to the Vestibule, at the back of which are large folding doors.*
—*Music.*

Enter KALIG, R., who stations the GUARDS, to prevent the POPULACE from pressing too forward, R.—When they are arranged, exit KALIG, L.—Shouts, drums, &c., R. Enter OBERTO, ELVINO, and EDMOND, R. 1 E.

OBERTO. Well, my children, here we are at Court. We must endeavour now to get access to the king; and that I fear, will not be easy.

ELVINO. Oh, father! I shudder at the consequences of your resolution. We were so happy!

OBERTO. We shall be more so—I pledge myself, we shall.

EDMOND. Can you believe so, Oberto? Alas! I fear not. The confused noise of the multitude, who throng towards the palace; their acclamations; the tumultuous preparations for the *fete*; everything here confuses my senses, and makes me the more regret my peaceful habitation. Oh, my father! let us return to the village and leave this place and all its pleasures.

OBERTO. No, no; my resolution's fixed. This royal magnificence, (*trumpets heard at a distance, R.*) this superb palace, transport me beyond myself. Already I think I hear them call you Prince. Come, my children, courage; we must be resolute. (*they are proceeding when stopped by the GUARDS, L.*)

GUARD. (*at the gate*) You must not pass.

KALIG. (*coming forward, L.*) Ah, 'tis Oberto! (*to the GUARDS*) Let them pass—pass them. This young man has the misfortune to be blind: it would be dangerous to let him stay in the crowd.

The GUARDS retire, L.

OBERTO. Sir, is it you? 'Tis fortunate we have met you here so soon. Behold the prince— (*pointing to EDMOND*)

KALIG. (*prevents his finishing his sentence*) Beware, Oberto! You are surrounded by Prince Rodolph's spies.

Enter MOLINO, who is repulsed by the GUARDS, R.

MOLINO. Let me pass, let me pass! I am of the same party, I tell you.

KALIG. (*to the GUARDS, R.*) Pass him.

MOLINO. Indeed! I'd have you know—Lord! it's my neighbour Oberto; that's his son, and the young gentleman that came in my chaise; and you would not, ha, ha, ha! (*to KALIG*)—Why, these droll gentlemen wouldn't let me pass.

OBERTO. Silence, I say. (*takes KALIG aside*) What is to be done? The paper you gave me—I must show its contents to the king—aye, to the king himself; I must speak to him—some one must help me to an interview, and you are that person.

KALIG. Oberto, I fear there is an insurmountable bar. For a long time past, Stanislaus has only been accessible by Prince Rodolph. Through Rodolph every application must pass before the king will listen to it. Think, then, how impossible—(*trumpets without, R.*)

MOLINO. There's a sight. Law, law! how fine, to be sure! Look, Elvino, do look! Look, Edmond! Ah, what a pity Edmond can't see.

OBERTO. Molino, be quiet. (*looking out*) 'Tis Prince Rodolph passing to the marriage ceremony. What if I throw myself in his way and say I have a petition to present to the king? When he was at my house yesterday, he spoke to me, often called me a brave fellow, and said he would not forget my hospitality.

KALIG. You know him not: his pride will spurn you from him: besides, should he, by chance, but see the poor blind prince, his suspicions will be instantly awakened. His father, the late Palatine, on his death-bed revealed to him the dreadful secret of his birth; and the fear always haunts him of the discovery of Sarmatia's rightful heir.

OBERTO. (*in great perplexity*) What is to be done? I must hazard something. (*crosses, C.*) Children—Molino, retire while the prince passes. *They go off, R. U. E.*

Grand March—Enter RODOLPH, R., richly dressed, thoughtful and discontented, followed by ATTENDANTS.

OBERTO. (*throwing himself in his way*) Prince, I would speak with you. (*RODOLPH looks at him haughtily and goes on*) My lord, I am the old soldier, whom yesterday—

RODOLPH. (*interrupting him hastily*) Some other time.

OBERTO. (*holding him by the cloak*) My prince, the affair will admit of no delay.

RODOLPH. (*disengaging himself quickly*) What audacity! Guards! (*two GUARDS advance—they seize OBERTO—Music*)

Enter EDMOND and ELVINO, hastily, R. U. E.—she throws her arms around her FATHER'S neck—KALIG steps before EDMOND, to prevent his being seen by RODOLPH.

RODOLPH. (*after a pause*) Could no other time but this be found for your intrusion? But, as you were attentive to me yesterday in the forest, I pardon you. Guards, let them pass; but see that you intrude no more. (*march recommences—RODOLPH passes on to the ceremony, L.*)

Enter MOLINO, R. U. E.

MOLINO. Oh, dear! oh, dear! what does all this mean? When I saw you step up, and speak to the prince, I expected from his fair promises yesterday, to see you and him go cheek by jowl—free and easy—no ceremony: you gave him your best wine, and that generally makes an intimacy between the lord and the chimney-sweeper. OBERTO *sends MOLINO off, L.*

ELVINO. Father, Edmond, let us begone; and leave this scene of danger for our peaceful home.

EDMOND. Oh, more than father! Oh, dear Oberto! let us return. Till this day I was most happy. What was wanting to make me so? I was beloved by all around me; here, my life is sought by wicked men I never injured. Oh! then, beloved father, listen to me. These poor sightless eyes are filled with drops of gratitude. Let them fall on your dear hand, and induce you to pity and indulge me.

OBERTO. (*much affected*) My child, my prince, what can I say? Think of my affection, think of my duty. Your mother calls from the grave—remember her injunction: "In the name of the good powers, who watch over the safety of Sarmatia, I command you to divulge the truth."

KALIG. Hear me, Oberto. When last we parted, I promised, at the hazard of my life, to serve you; willingly would I lay down that life to save my prince; but danger presses him on every side. Then let his country be his champion—proclaim his wrongs aloud, and in one instant, every loyal heart will swell to serve a prince, so wronged, so virtuous.

OBERTO. Ay, but the voice that first proclaims his wrongs will also sound his knell.

KALIG. Stanislaus loves Rodolph as his son. He is about to give his hand in marriage to the fair Lida, Duchess of Lithuania; should the king find Edmond blind, and lowly bred, he might wish to conceal his rights; a public declaration would render that impossible. (*trumpets are heard without, L.*)

OBERTO. The procession advances. The moment is at hand.

How my old heart beats. Rouse, rouse! Recollect, Oberto, the fate of Sarmatia is in your hands.

Exit with EDMOND, ELVINO, and KALIG, R. U. E.

Trumpets, &c. flourish as the KING advances.—Enter the KING with LIDA on his L., and RODOLPH on his R., attended by his COURT, from the L.—grand procession—they go towards R.—Music.

STANIS. My loyal subjects, indulge your mirth—celebrate the happiness of your prince, of your king, who, in this august alliance, has considered but your welfare and the happiness of Sarmatia.

(the C. doors are thrown open—the BISHOP, attended by PRIESTS, INCENSE BEARERS, &c., receives him—the betrothed couple bow before him—the BISHOP raises his hands over them, in the act of blessing them)

HIGH PRIEST. I here betroth Prince Rodolph, son of Stanislaus—

OBERTO comes forward, R., followed by EDMOND and ELVINO.

OBERTO. *(with all his force)* He is not the son of Stanislaus!
(Music—expressive of astonishment and general confusion—the KING, LIDA, and RODOLPH come forward)

STANIS. Who is the rash, audacious man?

OBERTO. *(taking EDMOND's hand)* My liege, behold your son!

RODOLPH. (L.) His son!

OBERTO. *(offers the KING the packet)* Yes, my liege, your son. Deign but to cast your eyes on this writing.

STANIS. 'Tis the writing of the queen.

(Music—expressive of astonishment—the KING seems greatly agitated while reading and frequently takes his eyes off the packet to look at EDMOND, then reads on)

STANIS. *(aside)* What have I read? *(approaches EDMOND, takes his hand, and looks at him with fixed attention)*

OBERTO. *(low to EDMOND)* 'Tis the king. *(Music—EDMOND kneels with reverence and affection)*

STANIS. These features—so like the queen! The writing too! *(aside)* We will return to the palace. *(to EDMOND)* Come, unfortunate youth! Rodolph, let the council be instantly assembled!

Exit RODOLPH, L.
In their presence we will read this letter, and interrogate Oberto—no means must be left untried to ascertain the truth.

(to the HIGH PRIEST) Holy pontiff, the marriage rites must be suspended.

Music—the HIGH PRIEST, &c., turn to the Temple—Tableau, closed in by

END OF ACT THE SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*The Banks of the Vistula.—A terrace, under which the water is seen—high and winding rocks, R., against which the river dashes with great fury.*

Enter STANISLAUS and RODOLPH, L. U. E.

STANIS. Rodolph, I have sought to be alone with you. By the extraordinary occurrences of the day, I have recovered a son whom Nature bids me cherish and regard; but he shall not destroy the paternal affection I feel for thee, my Rodolph.

RODOLPH. Not Rodolph now, my liege.

STANIS. But still the Palatine of Rava, by the right of birth. Rodolph, though he ceases to be my son, has still a claim on my affection, and on my justice, too: I will repay it, therefore, with the fair hand of the duchess, whom you so much love, and the dukedom of Lithuania, which you so well deserve.

RODOLPH. Ah! my liege, when Edmond once begins to wind himself about your heart, then farewell Lithuania's new-made duke!

STANIS. Never, Rodolph; for, should fate call Edmond from me, Lithuania's duke succeeds to Stanislaus. My confidence in you is as unbounded as my love: I have committed young Edmond to your charge; and, as a farther earnest of my love, I place this ring, of value most inestimable, upon your finger. Should you, at any time, perceive my affection diminish, present this to my view, and I will instantly fold you to my heart, and you shall be my son again. *Exit, L. U. E.*

RODOLPH. Ah! then Lithuania's duke succeeds, if Edmond falls—why, then, my hopes revive. I have already placed a guard, devoted to my service, over the young prince—I have also taken care to have Oberto and his daughter removed from him. Now, Starow, where is that dagger which peeped, officious, from its scabbard, to greet the enemy I only dreaded. He's found, he's found, he's found! and now, indeed, I lack thy murderous aid.

Enter STAROW, R. 1 E.

RODOLPH. Ah, Starow, this accursed boy!

STAROW. (R.) My prince, I've heard it all; but joy to find you have him in your power.

RODOLPH. (C.) I have, my friend; and 'tis your kind hand must rid me of the charge; but how, my friendly Starow—how?

STAROW. My lord, the night is dark, the wind rages, and the Vistula rolls wide and deep under the window of young Edmond's prison.

RODOLPH. 'Tis well conceived; but I must not appear in this. Is there no friendly hand, whose aid you can confide in for the task?

STAROW. My lord, have you observed a dejected man about the court, who seems to brood in silence over his wrongs?

RODOLPH. What, Kalig?

STAROW. The same, my prince. Him I've noted for a purpose like the present.

RODOLPH. I like him not; but, better he than one I do, for he must not survive, to blab the tale. Thus let it be: soon as the day shuts in, I will myself conduct the prince—you shall receive him from my hand—my voice must not be heard; you and Kalig force him on board a boat—then make what speed you can to gain the centre of the river, leaving Kalig to watch the shore—be sure to gain the middle of the stream, and there——

STAROW. I understand, my lord.

RODOLPH. Be careful to repeat the name of Kalig frequently in Edmond's hearing, that if any chance should thwart us, he may bear the odium of the crime; and when the boy sinks in the wave, give the signal of success with your horn, and row with all speed some distance down the river. When I hear the signal, I will alarm the palace with the loss of Edmond, and myself encourage the vain search that will be made.

STAROW. My prince, I fully comprehend—will instantly find out Kalig, and answer, with my life, that all shall be as you desire.

Crosses, and exit, L.

RODOLPH. Farewell, villain! Sooner than you suspect, your life shall answer it.

Enter OBERTO and ELVINO, R.—stage darkens.

OBERTO. My lord, you have given orders that no person shall approach the apartments of Prince Edmond. I suppose 'twas through forgetfulness that my son and myself were not excepted.

RODOLPH. The order is a general one, and admits of no exception.

ELVINO. What are we forbidden to see the prince? we, who have sworn never to leave him?

RODOLPH. You may sometimes, perhaps be allowed to see him.

ELVINO. Sometimes! oh, heavens!

OBERTO. My child, the prince means daily.

RODOLPH. The prince has no such meaning. Oberto, you forget; you fail in the respect you owe me.

OBERTO. Pardon me, my lord, but I shall fail still more, if 'tis your intention to imprison the son of your master.

RODOLPH. Oberto, leave me. (*partly draws his sword*)

ELVINO. Oh, my father!

OBERTO. Boy, I tell you, I will speak; it shall never be said that Oberto brought up the heir to Sarmatia's crown, that he loved him as his son for twenty years, and that in one day he tamely gave consent to a life-long banishment from the boy he so loved. My lord, I ask not, for what I have done, honour, dignity, or wealth, but let me be near my Edmond. I have told you how I love him, and must and will see him daily.

RODOLPH. (*aside*) Let me constrain my rage. (*to OBERTO*) Well, sir, calm your anger—wait patiently but till to-morrow, and then—

Exit, L.

OBERTO. Oh! Elvino, what does he mean? Wait till to-morrow! A dreadful night intervenes before that morrow. Ah! why did I not listen to the poor afflicted boy this morning? He said right—we were happy. Wretch that I am! my cursed ambition has destroyed him. Ye protectors of innocence oppressed, avert all dangers from Prince Edmond's head! On me, on me, direct their murderous aim! Come, my child, let us fly to save our prince, or perish nobly with him.

Exeunt, L.—Music.

KALIG and STAROW enter in a boat—they advance—KALIG appears to swear fidelity—they part—STAROW goes towards the terrace—*Music.*

STAROW. (*on the terrace*) Remember, you have sworn. (*music*)

Exit STAROW, L. U. E.

KALIG. What is to be done? A few short moments, and Edmond will be here; and I am singled out to help in this base murder! what if I fly to the palace, and reveal the whole? But assistance will arrive too late, and the crime—hold, let me consider—Starow said Rodolph will not be with us—Starow alone—then, danger, I defy you.

Music.—RODOLPH appears on the terrace, L. U. E., holding EDMOND by one hand—EDMOND appears uneasy—STAROW has a horn suspended round his neck.

EDMOND. Why does this hand grasp mine so violently?

Why does it tremble so? Pray answer me. Where would you lead me? (*he is led forward by RODOLPH—RODOLPH signs STAROW to answer*)

STAROW. (*advancing close to EDMOND, C.*) I have already told you, my lord, to that part of the palace where Oberto and his son wait for you. We could not resist their entreaties and whilst Prince Rodolph is busy with the king, we have seized the opportunity to lead you to your friends. Come, my lord, come on. (*RODOLPH endeavours to force him*)

EDMOND. (*resisting*) But I am not in the palace now; the air which blows upon me—

STAROW. We are in one of the courts which we must cross to —

EDMOND. (C.) A court! 'tis a very large one, then. 'Tis filled with trees and flowers.

RODOLPH. (R. C.) Ha!

EDMOND. And bordered by a river.

STAROW. (*embarrassed*) A river!

EDMOND. (*pointing with left hand*) Yes; 'tis there—I hear the noise of water. I feel the moisture that exhales from it.

RODOLPH. (*low and impatiently*) Come on—come on.

EDMOND. Is not that Prince Rodolph's voice?

STAROW. No, my lord; my comrade, Kalig.

EDMOND. Kalig?

STAROW. Yes; he urges us to lose no time. Let us begone.

EDMOND. (*uneasy*) You must conduct me back from whence you brought me.

STAROW. I mean it, my prince.

EDMOND. I am not safe here.

STAROW. Why so, my lord?

(*RODOLPH tries to get his hand away from EDMOND*)

EDMOND. I tell you, I am not in safety.

KALIG. (R.) Indeed, my prince, I promise you, you are. I answer to you, you have nothing now to fear.

(*RODOLPH struggles with EDMOND*)

EDMOND. Why do you force your hand from me?—If you leave me in this strange place, I shall be in danger.

(*RODOLPH gets his hand away*)

KALIG. My prince, I only wish, as the evening is dark, to explore the way for you. (*coming up to him, and taking his hand*) All is safe, and now I can conduct you without danger.

EDMOND. Oh, heaven! how many of you are there?—This is not the hand which just now—

KALIG. 'Tis the hand of a friend, my lord; be not uneasy.

EDMOND. Oh, who could be so cruel as to take advantage of my wretched situation.

RODOLPH makes signs of impatience, and points to the boat.

STAROW. (*pulls him forward*) Come, my prince, come.

EDMOND. No; a storm threatens, and if we go farther—

STAROW. A storm, did he say?

KALIG. Yes, he's right, the night looks black. (*lightning*)

STAROW. 'Tis nothing but a few passing clouds, and will soon be over.

EDMOND. I tell you, 'twill be terrible. (*distant thunder*) Did you hear that?—The thunder rolls already.

RODOLPH *mounts the terrace, and exit, L. U. E., pointing to the boat*—STAROW *leads EDMOND a few paces towards the terrace, and then turns away, R.*

STAROW. Well, then, my lord, we will return to your apartment.

EDMOND. Stop—this is not the way we came—there—(*pointing to the L.*—STAROW *forces him towards the boat, C.*—EDMOND *resists forcibly*) Villains! where is the traitor that employs you?

STAROW. My lord, 'tis needless—you must come with us.

EDMOND. Vile wretches! Oh, that my cries may—

Music.

KALIG. Now, heaven assist me!

KALIG *leaves the PRINCE, and goes round to STAROW, takes hold of the horn that hangs to his neck, and throws him from the PRINCE round to R.—the chain of the horn breaks, and KALIG draws his sabre—they stand for a moment, gazing at each other.*

STAROW. Ah, traitor!

KALIG. Thou liest—I am no traitor, but while this arm can wield a sword, it shall protect its lawful prince. (*combat—they fight off towards the rock, R. U. E.*)

EDMOND. Oh, whither shall I fly! Oh, Oberto! oh, Elvino, come to my aid! (*lightning—he goes off, L. 1 E.*)

Enter ELVINO from the terrace, L. U. E.

ELVINO. (*comes forward*) Sure I heard the voice of Edmond. He called on me! on my father! Ha! what noise is that? (*noise of swords up the rock, R. U. E.*) Swords gleam through the darkness of the night. Perhaps some succour to the oppressed. I see them—good heavens! what fury animates them!

KALIG. (*on the top of the rock, R. U. E.*) Die, perfidious wretch! (*thrusts his sword into STAROW's breast, and forces him over the rock into the river, R. U. E.*)

ELVINO. How dreadful this suspense! I see not Edmond. (*thunder and lightning*) Hark! did I not hear footsteps? (*looks out*) 'Tis one of the men who—ah, he comes this way. (*hurrying—Music—he runs and hides himself, R.*)

Enter KALIG, from the rock, R. U. E., looking about with cautious uneasiness, holding the horn which STAROW had.

KALIG. Not here! What has become of him? Where is he gone? What's to be done? Ah! I'll sound this horn, with which the traitor Starow was to inform his master that the prince was dead. Rodolph, deceived by the well-known signal, will alarm the palace, and assist me to save him whom he had devoted to destruction.

KALIG goes towards the balustrade at the bottom, and sounds the horn, then exit up the terrace, L. U. E.

ELVINO. Good heavens! 'tis some dreadful signal! perhaps the one that Rodolph waits for; where shall I bend my steps?—oh, Edmond! Edmond! answer me.

Goes off, R.—lightning.

Re-enter EDMOND, L., and crosses to the rock, R.

EDMOND. Here Elvino, here. This way I heard his voice Elvino! Elvino! (*goes up the rock, R. U. E.—ELVINO runs on in terror, R. 1 E.*)

ELVINO. (*looking off, R.*) I heard him call my name. (*lightning*) Oh, heavens! by the gleam of the lightning's flash, I thought I saw him upon the rock. (*lightning*) Yes, 'tis Edmond! unhappy youth! one false step!--oh! let me fly to save him!

Music—he runs up the rock, R. U. E.—thunder and lightning increase—during the flashes, EDMOND is seen on the summit of the rock, R. U. E.

EDMOND. Almighty powers! send some pitying mortal to conduct my steps. From the sharp air which surrounds me, I think I stand on the edge of some frightful precipice. I will advance a few steps more.

(*ELVINO is seen climbing up the rock—at the sight of EDMOND, who is just at the edge of the precipice, he stops a moment and utters a shriek of horror, and exclaims, "Edmond! Edmond!"—Music*)

EDMOND. Elvino!

(*he falls into his arms, R. U. E.—ELVINO leads EDMOND down the winding path behind a large mass of trees, &c., which conceal them from the spectators*)

Enter RODOLPH, from the terrace, speaking to the GUARDS, bearing torches, who have KALIG in custody—stage light.

RODOLPH. Soldiers, disperse yourselves throughout the gardens; be watchful; prevent a dreadful crime. One of the villains I have already secured.

Exeunt FOUR GUARDS, R. and L. U. E.

Enter OBERTO, *from the terrace*, L. U. E.

OBERTO. Oh, a curse upon all traitors! Edmond has disappeared: who had the care of him? Who but Rodolph? Rodolph is the murderer.

RODOLPH. (*half draws his sword*) Ah!

OBERTO. Yes, villain, strike! You told me I should see my child to-morrow. Then, for once, keep thy hellish promise; strike through this poor broken heart, and let me join my murdered boy.

Enter STANISLAUS, *from the terrace*, L.—OFFICERS, GUARDS, DOMESTICS.

STANIS. Say, Rodolph, have they yet found my son?

RODOLPH. My liege, the guards this moment search the park, the gardens, and the borders of the river.

STANIS. Who can have planned this act of horror?

RODOLPH. It is difficult to guess.

ELVINO *and* EDMOND *enter*, R. U. E.

OBERTO. Prince Edmond—Prince Edmond is safe! (*runs and embraces him*).

STANIS. (*embracing him*) My son! my son!

RODOLPH. (*aside*) I am betrayed.

STANIS. My son, know you the traitors who assailed you?

EDMOND. I think there were three; one of them scarce spoke. A single word, in a low tone, escaped him, and I thought I recognized—but no, it cannot be—I might have been deceived.

RODOLPH. (*to EDMOND*) My lord, did not the assassins address each other by their names?

EDMOND. Yes; one of them, I think, was called Kalig.

STANIS. (L. U. E.) Kalig!

RODOLPH. (R., *to* STANISLAUS) Mark that, my liege—the man I have taken.

OBERTO. (*with energy*) No, my king, never believe it. Though he should himself confess, I never could believe it. Kalig, speak—what means all this?

KALIG. It means, my sovereign, that Starow was engaged by Rodolph to destroy the Prince. Starow employed me to aid him, but I slew the villain.

RODOLPH. Starow dead!

STANIS. Rodolph!

RODOLPH. (*to* STANISLAUS) Vain subterfuge! If Starow is no more, he has lost his life in endeavouring to save the prince.

EDMOND. I have every reason to think that one of them resolved to defend me. But, for the wicked man who dragged me from the palace, he perhaps, may be discovered.

STANIS. How, my dear son?

EDMOND. Why, in dragging away his hand, which I wished to keep in mine, he left this ring.

(*gives it to the KING—pause of astonishment—Music*)

STANIS. 'Tis the ring I gave to Rodolph. Guards, seize him.

RODOLPH. I know the punishment that awaits me; but I prefer death to the torment of seeing my rival mount that throne, so long my destined prize.

(STANISLAUS motions the GUARDS, who lead off RODOLPH, L.)

STANIS. (to KALIG) Brave man, I will reward your zeal. My age requires repose. You, I invest with the sovereign power—exercise it as you think right.

EDMOND. (*takes ELVINO's hand*) Oh, my father, then I am blessed indeed! Elvino will be my friend, and Oberto still my father.

Music.

GUARDS.

GUARDS.

OBERTO.

ELVINO.

EDMOND.

KING.

KALIG.

(*kneeling*)

R.

L.

Curtain.

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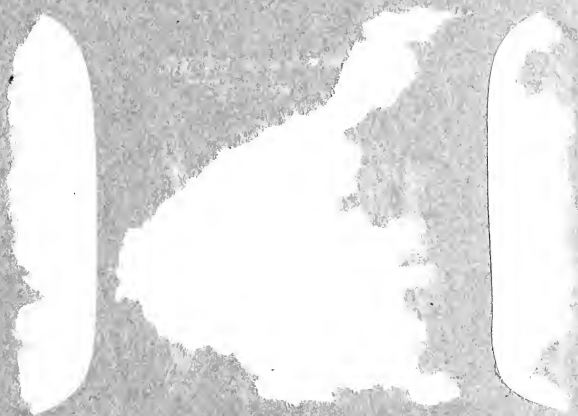
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